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GRIMM'S FAIRY STORIES

GRIMM'S

FAIRY STORIES

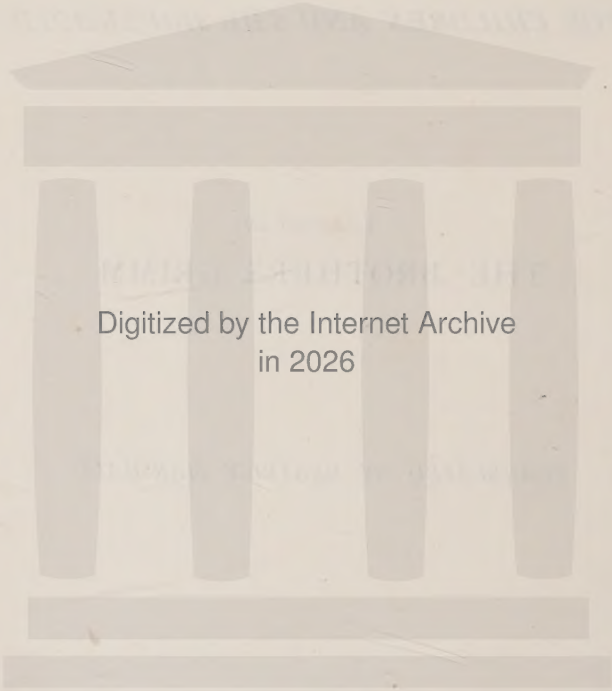
FOR CHILDREN AND THE HOUSEHOLD

COLLECTED BY

THE BROTHERS GRIMM

TRANSLATED BY BEATRICE MARSHALL

LONDON
WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED
NEW YORK AND MELBOURNE
1900



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GRIMM'S FAIRY STORIES

CINDERELLA

THE wife of a rich man fell ill, and feeling that her end was coming, she called her only little daughter to her bedside and said, "Dear child, always be good and pious, and God will be pleased with you. I will keep watch over you in heaven." Whereupon she closed her eyes and departed.

The girl visited her mother's grave every day and wept, and continued pious and good. When winter came the snow spread a white covering on her grave, but before the spring sunshine had melted it the rich man had married a second wife.

The new wife had two daughters, who came to live with her. They were pretty and fair to look upon, but their hearts were vile and wicked. The poor step-child now had a bad time of it. "This stupid goose shall not sit with us in the parlour," they said. "Whoever eats bread shall earn it. Let her be kitchenmaid." They took away her pretty clothes and gave her an old grey petticoat and wooden shoes to put on. "Look at the haughty princess," they cried. "How fine she is!" and with sneers and jibes they turned her into the kitchen. There she had to do all the hard work from morning to night. She drew the water, lit the fires, cooked and washed up. Besides this the sisters heaped every imaginable insult upon her. They shook peas and lentils into the ashes simply to give her the trouble of sifting them

out again, and at night when she had worked till she was dead-tired she was allowed no bed to sleep in, but had to go to rest on the hearth all among the cinders. And because she always looked dusty and dirty they called her Cinderella.

It happened that the father rode to town one day to attend mass, and before starting he asked his two step-daughters what he should bring them back.

"A lovely, dress," said one. "Pearls and rubies," said the other.

"And you, Cinderella, what would you like?" he asked.

"Father, the first branch of rice you come across as you ride home pick for me."

So he bought the step-sisters their beautiful dresses and precious stones, and on the way back through the green lanes a hazel-rice bush brushed his hat. He broke off the branch and took it home. He gave the step-daughters their presents and Cinderella the rice branch.

Cinderella thanked him, went to her mother's grave and planted the rice on it, and cried so bitterly that the tears fell and watered it. It grew soon into a beautiful tree. Cinderella visited the grave and sat under the tree three times every day. She wept and prayed there, and a little white bird sat on the tree, and every time she wished for something made a note of it.

Now it happened that the king was to hold a great *fête*, which was to last three days, and to which all the most beautiful girls in the country were invited, so that from amongst them the king's son should choose a bride. The two step-sisters were greatly excited when they knew they were to be present at the entertainment. They commanded Cinderella to dress their hair, to fasten their shoes, and make the buckles shine, "because," they explained, "we are going to the king's castle to a royal ball."

Cinderella obeyed, but shed tears because she would have liked to go to the dance too, and she asked her step-mother to take her.

"What, *you*, Cinderella," they all exclaimed, "dirty and dusty and ragged. Fancy you at the ball! You have no ball-dress and no dancing shoes."

But she still begged to be allowed to go, and then one of them said, "I have shaken a dish of lentils into the ashes, if you can sort them out in two hours' time you shall go."

The girl went out at the back door into the garden and called "Tame pigeons, turtle-doves, and every little bird that flies come and help me sort

The good into a biscuit-tin,
The bad into the dust-bin."

Then there alighted on the kitchen window two white pigeons, and then two turtle-doves, and afterwards a swarm of all the birds of the air descended among the ashes flapping their wings. First the pigeons gave a nod of the head and began to peck, peck, peck, then the rest began peck, peck, peck, and in time they had dropped all the good lentils out of their beaks into the tin. In an hour the work was completed and they flew away.

Then the girl carried the dish of lentils to her step-mother in great glee because she thought now she would certainly be allowed to go to the feast.

But the step-mother said, "No, Cinderella. You have no dress and can't dance. You would only be made fun of." But as Cinderella cried again, she said, "If you will sift two dishes of lentils out of the ashes you may come," and she thought to herself, "It is quite impossible for her ever to do that."

When the two dishes of lentils had been emptied into the ashes the girl went into the garden again and called, "Tame pigeons, turtle-doves, and all ye little birds under the sun, come and help me sort—

The good into a biscuit-tin,
The bad into the dust-bin."

And there flew down to the kitchen window two white pigeons, the turtle-doves, and soon all the birds of the air. They alighted among the ashes and the pigeons began peck, peck, peck, and the rest followed their example, and in half an hour the two dishes were full. The girl carried them to her step-mother, beaming with pleasure, for now she thought she certainly would be allowed to go.

But the step-mother said, "It is all of no use. How can you come with us when you have no clothes and can't dance? You would disgrace us." Whereupon she turned her back and hurried off with her two proud daughters.

As the house was now empty, Cinderella went to her mother's grave, and sitting under the tree cried—

"Shower, shower, little tree,
Gold and silver over me."

Then the white bird threw down to her a gold and silver dress and slippers embroidered with silk and silver.

The child speedily arrayed herself and went to the feast at the king's castle. Her sisters and the step-mother did not recognise her and thought she was some strange princess, she looked so dazzlingly beautiful in the gold dress. They never dreamed of this being Cinderella, who they believed was at home sorting lentils covered with dust and soot.

The prince came up to her, took her hand and danced with her. He wouldn't dance with any one else, and when others came to claim her said, "She is my partner."

She danced with him till midnight and then wished to go home. The prince said, "I will go with you to your door." Then he wanted to know where this most beautiful of all maidens lived. She evaded him, however, by jumping into the pigeon-house. The prince waited outside till her father came and told him the strange maiden had jumped into the pigeon-house.

"Can it be Cinderella?" thought the old man, and axes were brought with which they smashed the pigeon-house to pieces, but they found no one inside. And when they went into the house they saw Cinderella in her dirty old clothes among the ashes, with only a dim little oil-lamp burning in the chimney corner, for Cinderella had jumped out of the pigeon-house on the other side, had run to the rice-tree by her mother's grave, where she had taken off her pretty clothes, which the bird carried away, and then she had put on the old grey petticoat again and the wooden shoes and returned to her kitchen.

The next day when the *fête* had opened again and her parents and step-sisters had departed, Cinderella went once more to the rice-tree and said—

"Shower, shower, little tree,
Gold and silver over me."

This time the bird threw down a much grander dress than before, and on Cinderella appearing in it at the *fête*, every one wondered more than ever who she could be, and at her beauty.

The prince, who had been waiting for her, came forward at once and took her hand and danced with no one else. When others came to ask her to dance he said, "She is my partner."

Towards midnight she said she must be going, and the prince followed her because he wanted to see what house she lived in, but she ran away into the garden at the back of the house. There stood a splendid tall tree, on which hung the most luscious pears, and Cinderella climbed it like a squirrel and was soon hidden in the branches, so that the prince didn't know where she had gone.

He lingered till the father came, and he said to him, "The strange maiden has run away from me, and I believe she is hiding in the pear-tree."

The father thought, "I wonder if it's Cinderella?" and fetched an axe. He felled the tree, but no one was on it. And when they came into the kitchen Cinderella was crouching among the ashes, for she had jumped off the pear-tree on the other side, had run to the grave and given back her fine raiment to the bird and put on her grey petticoat again.

On the third day, when the parents and step-sisters had gone to the *fête*, Cinderella went to her mother's grave and said to the little tree—

"Shower, shower, little tree,
Gold and silver over me."

The bird instantly threw down a dress, the like of which for magnificence had never been seen before, and the

slippers to go with it were of pure gold. The admiration of the guests at the ball knew no bounds.

The prince danced with her all the evening, and when any one else asked her said, "She is my partner."

But when it grew late Cinderella said she must go, and the prince said he would escort her home, but she was so quick, he could not follow her.

However, the prince this time resorted to a stratagem. He had had the whole staircase covered with glue, and as the girl flew down it she left one of her shoes sticking there. The prince picked it up. It was tiny, dainty, and quite golden.

The next morning he went to the man and said to him, "I will only wed her whose foot this golden slipper fits."

Both the step-sisters when they heard this were glad, because they had pretty little feet. The eldest took the shoe into her room and, with her mother standing over her, tried to force it on, but her big toe wouldn't go in, so her mother handed her a knife and said, "Cut off your toe; when you are queen you will never have to walk." The girl hewed off her big toe, squashed her foot into the shoe, and trying to hide the pain she was in, walked out to the prince. He placed her as his bride on his horse and rode away with her. But they had to pass the grave, and on the rice-tree there sat two little pigeons who cried—

"Look! look! coo, coo, coo,
Blood's running out of the shoe.
The shoe is much too small;
You have the wrong bride after all!"

The prince looked down at the bride's foot and saw blood pouring from it. He turned his horse's head round and rode back with the wrong bride. He explained that she was not the right one, and told the other sister to try on the shoe. She took it into her room and got her toes in all right, but she couldn't squeeze in the heel.

Her mother handed her a knife and told her to slice a bit of her heel off. "For," she said, "when you are queen you won't want to walk any more." The girl sliced off a piece of her heel, forced her foot into the

shoe, and, hiding her agonies, went out to the prince. He accepted her as his bride, put her on his horse and rode off.

But as they passed the rice-tree the two little pigeons sat down and called out—

"Look! look! coo, coo, coo,
Blood is running out of the shoe.
The shoe is much too small;
You haven't the right bride after all."

The prince looked down at the bride's foot and saw blood pouring out till the white stockings were dyed red. So he turned his horse round and took the wrong bride home again.

"This is not the right one either!" he said. "Haven't you another daughter?"

"No," answered the man, "only one by my dead wife, a poor, half-starved little cinder-wench! She can't possibly be the right bride."

The prince said she was to be brought up, but the mother interposed and said, "No, no, she is far too dirty. I should be ashamed for you to see her."

But the prince insisted that Cinderella should be called. She first washed her hands and face, then came and curtsied before the king's son, who handed her the golden slipper. Then she sat down on a stool, drew her foot out of the heavy wooden shoe and thrust it into the slipper, which fitted as if it had been melted on. And as she stood up and looked the prince in the face he recognised the beautiful girl he had danced with and exclaimed, "Here is the right bride!"

The step-mother and the two sisters drew back white with rage; but he took Cinderella, put her on his horse and rode away. And now when they passed the rice-tree the two little white pigeons called—

"Look! look! coo, coo, coo,
No blood in the shoe!
The shoe is not too small;
You've got the right bride after all."

And they both flew down and alighted on Cinderell shoulders, one on her left and the other on her right.

The wicked sisters came to the royal wedding a flattered the bride and tried to share her glory.

As the bridal pair walked to the church the eldest sis was on her right side and the youngest on her left, a the pigeons picked out an eye of each. And on the w back from the church the eldest was on the left side a the youngest on the right, and the pigeons picked o their other eye, so they were punished for their wickedn and cruelty by being blind for the rest of their lives.

THE RICH MAN AND THE POOR MAN

In the olden times, when the Lord was Himself on ea among men, it happened one evening that night fell bef He had reached His destination. He was tired, a paused in the road between two houses. One was a b and beautiful mansion, the other a poor little cottage. T big house belonged to a rich man, the little cottage to poor one. The Lord thought, "It will not inconvenien the rich man to put Me up for the night." So He knock at the rich man's door, who opened the window and ask what the stranger wanted. The Lord answered, "I a looking for a place where I can pass the night."

The owner of the house scanned the wanderer fr head to foot, and because He wore shabby clothes a did not look as if He had much money in His pockets shook his head and said, "I can't take you in. My spa rooms are full of bulbs and seeds, and if I entertain every one who knocked at my door I should soon ha to take to begging myself and seek a bed elsewher Thereupon he slammed down the window and left t Lord standing in the road.

So the Lord turned His back on the rich man's hou and went over to the little cottage. He had scarc knocked before the poor man unbarred the door and ask the wanderer to walk in.

"Stay the night with me," he said, "it is getting da and you cannot walk much farther."

The Lord was pleased and went in. The poor man's wife held out her hand to bid Him welcome. She said she would do her best to make Him comfortable, though there was not much to offer Him. She put some potatoes on the fire, and while they were boiling she milked her goat. When the table was laid the Lord sat down and ate the humble fare with His host and hostess, and their contented faces made everything taste good.

When they had finished supper, and it was time to go to bed, the woman called her husband and whispered to him, "To-night we will repose on straw, so that the poor wanderer can have our bed to rest in ; he has been tramping all day and must be dead-tired."

"With all my heart I will give up my bed to him," said the husband, and went to the Lord and proposed that He should sleep in it. At first He did not like to deprive the old couple of their couch, but as they would not take a refusal He at last consented. The next morning the pair rose early from their straw and cooked the guest a breakfast. When the sun streamed through the window the Lord got up, and after partaking of the meal said He must go on His way. Before departing He paused on the threshold.

"As you have been so kind and hospitable," He said, "ask for any three things you like, and I will grant them."

The poor man replied, "What should I wish for more than eternal bliss, and that we two may live in the enjoyment of our present health and our daily bread? A third wish I cannot think of."

The Lord said, "Would you not like to have a new house instead of this old one?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the man, "if I might have that too, I should like it very much."

So the Lord changed their cottage into a new house, gave them His blessing, and went on His road. It was broad day when the rich man got up. He looked out of the window and saw opposite a new, clean house with red tiles, where before had stood an old tumble-down hovel. He opened his eyes wide with surprise, called his wife and asked her what had happened. "Yesterday evening the miserable hovel was still there," he said. "Now it is gone,

and there is a beautiful new house standing in its place. Go and inquire what it means."

The woman went and questioned the poor couple, who told her that the night before a stranger had sought and received hospitality in their house, and that at parting in the morning He had promised to grant them three wishes, viz., eternal life in the world to come, health and daily bread in this, and instead of their poor dwelling a new house. The wife of the rich man ran back quickly with the news to her husband.

He exclaimed, "I could tear myself to pieces with vexation! If I had only known! The stranger came here first and I refused to take him in."

"Make haste," cried his wife, "mount your horse, and you will still be able to get up to the man and ask him to grant you three wishes."

The rich man followed this advice, jumped on his horse, and galloped off as hard as he could go. He overtook the Lord, addressed Him in a suave and polite tone, begging to be forgiven for not letting Him into his house the night before. "The fact is, I was looking for the key of the front door," he explained, "when you turned away! If you come our road again, please drop in on us; we shall be delighted."

"Yes," said the Lord, "if I come back that way, I will."

Then the rich man asked if He could not grant him three wishes, as He had to his neighbour.

The Lord said he could, but it would be better for him not to wish, for he might be none the better for it. The rich man, however, was sure he could think of something to wish for that if granted would bring him happiness.

So the Lord said, "Ride home, and your three wishes shall be fulfilled."

The rich man, having gained his point, rode homewards, thinking hard of what he should wish for. While he meditated he let the reins fall over the horse's neck, and the horse began to shy, so that his thoughts were disturbed and he could not collect them again. He touched the horse on the head with his whip and said, "Go quietly, Licse," but the horse shied again. Then he became angry, and losing patience he exclaimed, "I wish you'd break your neck!"

No sooner had he spoken the word than the horse fell and lay dead on the ground. Thus his first wish was granted. But the man was avaricious by nature, and didn't wish to leave the saddle and bridle behind with the dead horse, so he cut them off and hung them on his back and started along the road on foot.

"I have still two wishes left!" He consoled himself with this reflection as he trudged through the sand. The midday sun burnt fiercely, and he became hotter and more irritable. The saddle weighed heavily on his back, and he still could not decide what to wish for. "Even if I wish for all the riches and treasure conceivable, other things are sure to occur to me afterwards," he thought. "I should like to arrange to wish so that there would be nothing more left to wish for." He sighed, and was now and again on the point of wishing, when he thought better of it. Then he reflected how his wife was sitting at home in a nice cool room, refreshing herself with iced drinks, while he was toiling along in the hot sun. It made him more irritable than ever, and without knowing what he said, he muttered, "I wish she was sitting on this saddle and that I hadn't got it on my back," and directly the last word was out of his mouth the saddle vanished, and he realised that his second wish was gone.

Now he waxed feverishly hot and furious and began to run, because he wanted to get home and shut himself up alone in his room to think over something great and grand for his last wish. But when he arrived and opened the parlour door, his wife shrieked and yelled at him from the saddle, for she was stuck fast on it and couldn't get off. He shouted, "Calm yourself! I will wish you all the riches and beautiful things in the world if you'll only sit still and be quiet."

She, however, scolded and abused him. "You blockhead!" she cried, "what good will that be if you don't help me down first? All the riches in the world are nothing to me seated on this saddle." So whether he liked it or not he was obliged to use his third and last wish to release his wife from her position, and the wish was immediately fulfilled.

Thus his three wishes brought the rich man nothing

but pain, abuse, and trouble, and a dead horse into the bargain ; while the poor couple over the road lived in peace and contentment till the end of their days.

THE SINGING, JUMPING LARK

THERE was once a man who was going on a journey, and before bidding his three daughters farewell he asked them what presents they would like him to bring them home. The eldest daughter said pearls, the second diamonds, but the third said, "Dearest father, I should like a singing, jumping little lark."

Her father answered, "You shall have it if it is possible to get such a thing," and then kissed his three children and departed. When the time drew near for him to be thinking of his return home he had purchased pearls and diamonds for the two eldest, but the singing, jumping lark the youngest daughter had wished for he had, to his regret, not succeeded in procuring.

His way lay through a forest, in the middle of which was a splendid castle, close to which stood a tree, and on the highest branch sat a singing, jumping lark. "You come in just handy," he exclaimed, in great joy, for his youngest child was his pet, and he had been sad at the thought of disappointing her. He called to his servant and told him to climb the tree and catch the lark.

But just as the servant neared the tree a lion sprang out shaking his mane, and roared till the foliage of the trees trembled, "Whoever steals my singing, jumping lark," he said, "I'll eat up."

The man said, "I had no idea the bird belonged to you. I will repair my wrong and buy my liberty with gold, if only you will spare my life."

The lion answered, "Nothing can save you except the promise that you will give me what meets you first on your return home. If you consent to this you may take the lark for your daughter, and your life is spared."

The man hesitated and said, "It might be my youngest daughter herself, for she loves me dearly, and often runs to meet me when I come home."

But his servant in great anxiety put in, "Why should it be your daughter? It is more likely to be one of the cats or dogs." So the man allowed himself to be talked over, took the singing, jumping lark, and promised the lion in return the first thing he met within his gates.

When he reached his house the first person to meet him was no one else but his youngest and best-beloved daughter. She rushed into his arms and kissed and hugged him. When she saw he had brought her the singing, jumping lark, she was beside herself for joy.

The father, however, was unable to rejoice with her, but began to weep, saying, "My darling child, this little bird has cost me dear, for in exchange for it I have been obliged to promise you to a savage lion, who, when he gets you, will certainly tear you to pieces." And then he related to her the whole story of what had happened, and entreated her not to go, no matter what should come of his not fulfilling his promise to the lion.

She consoled him and said, "Dearest father, what you have promised must be done; I will go and soothe the lion, and come back to you safe and sound." The next day she said goodbye, and asked to be shown the way into the forest.

The lion was a bewitched king's son, and he and all his attendants were only lions by day, at night they assumed their human shapes. So when the girl arrived at the castle she was well received, and at night the lion became a beautiful prince, who at once celebrated his marriage with the new arrival. They lived happily together, sleeping by day and awake all through the night.

Once he said to her, "There is to be a feast at your father's house to-morrow, because your eldest sister is to be married. If you would like to go my lions shall escort you."

She said she would love to see her father again, and so set out accompanied by the lions. There was great rejoicing when she appeared, as every one believed she had been devoured, and had perished long ago. She told them what a charming husband she had, and how happy she was, and when the wedding feast was over she went back to the forest.

When her second sister was married, and she was again invited to the wedding, she said to the lion, "This time I will not go alone, you must come with me."

The lion answered that it would be dangerous for him to go, for if a ray of burning light should fall on him he would be turned into a pigeon, and would be doomed to fly about for seven years.

But his wife said, imploringly, "Do come with me, I will protect you, and take care to shade you from all light."

So he gave in, and they set out together, taking with them their infant daughter.

When they reached her old home she ordered a space in the hall to be thickly walled off, and here he was to sit when the wedding lights were kindled. But the door was made of fresh wood, which warped, and there was a small crack in it which no one noticed. When, after the ceremony had been solemnised with great splendour, the bridal procession came back from the church with torches and lighted tapers, a stray flicker of flame fell on the prince, and when his wife came in she could not see him, but only a white pigeon.

The pigeon said to her, "Seven years must I fly about in the world, but at every seven steps I will let fall a white feather and a drop of blood; these will guide you in the right path which, if you follow, will lead to my freedom."

The pigeon then flew out at the door, and she followed, and at every seven steps there fell a drop of blood and a white feather to show her the path. So she went on and on into the wide world, and never rested till the seven years were nearly up, when she rejoiced at the prospect of setting her husband at liberty. Then at last no drop of blood and no feather fell, and on opening her eyes she saw the pigeon had vanished.

She thought, "Men can't help you," and mounted up to the sun.

"Have you, dear sun, who shine over all the hills, and in all the crevices, seen a white pigeon?" she asked.

"No," answered the sun, "I have not seen one. But here's a present of a box which opens if you are in great trouble."

She thanked the sun and went on till evening, when the moon rose.

Then she asked the moon, "You who shine all through the night, and on all the fields and forest, have you seen a white pigeon?"

"No," said the moon, "I haven't seen one, but here's a present of an egg, which if you are in great trouble break."

She thanked the moon and went on till the night breeze came and blew on her face, she said to it, "You, who breathe through the trees and stir the leaves, have you seen a white pigeon?"

"No," said the night breeze, "but I'll ask the three other winds. They may perhaps have seen such a thing."

The east and west winds came and said they had seen no white pigeon, but the south wind said, "Yes, I have seen a white pigeon, it has flown to the Red Sea, and there has become a lion again, for the seven years are up. He is at war with a crocodile at present, who is really a princess in disguise."

Then the night breeze said to her, "I will give you advice. Go to the shores of the Red Sea; on the right bank you'll find great bulrushes and reeds growing. Cut a handful, belabour the crocodile with them, and then the lion will get the better of the contest, and both will resume their natural shape. Afterwards take a look round and you will see the great bird Grief, who roosts by the Red Sea; spring with your beloved on to the bird's back and he will carry you over land and sea and home again. Here is a nut which, when you are in the middle of the ocean, you must drop, and at once there will grow up a huge nut-tree out of the water, on the branches of which Grief will want to rest, else he would be too tired to carry you over. And if you forget to drop the nut he will drop you both into the sea.

So she went and did all the night breeze instructed her to do. She cut the reeds and beat the crocodile with them. Then the lion got the better of it, and both turned into human beings again. But the princess who had been a crocodile, directly she was released from the spell, took the youth in her arms, jumped on bird Grief's back and went off.

There stood the poor wanderer, who had come so far,

forsaken, and she sat down and cried. At last she again took courage, and said, "I will walk on and on as long as the winds blow, and the cocks crow, till I find him."

And so she wandered for miles and miles, till at last she came to the castle where the pair had gone to live.

There was a party in progress to celebrate their nuptials. So she opened her little box which the sun had given her, and found a dress in it as dazzling as the sun itself. She took it out, put it on, and went up to the castle, where every one admired her more than the bride, and the bride herself regarded her with amazement. The dress, indeed, took the bride's fancy so much, that she asked how much she would part with it for.

"Not for gold untold," was the answer, "but for flesh and blood I might."

The bride asked what she meant.

"Let me sleep one night," she said, "in the bedchamber of the bridegroom and you shall have the dress."

The bride did not like the idea, but as she wanted the dress badly, she consented, but ordered the page of the bedchamber to give his master a sleeping draught.

When night came, and the youth was already asleep, she was led into the room. She sat down on the bed and said, "Seven years I followed you through the world, then I went to the sun and moon and the four winds of heaven and asked their help, and I beat the crocodile with rushes and rescued you. Have you forgotten it all?" But the prince slept so sound, that her voice only sounded to him like the wind sweeping the pine-trees outside.

When the morning dawned she was led out, and had to give up the gold dress. And as her scheme hadn't answered she was very sorrowful, and went and sat down in a meadow and cried. And then she remembered the egg the moon had given her. She broke it, and out came a clucking hen with a brood of twelve little golden chicken that ran about piping. It was the prettiest sight in the world to see them under their mother's wing.

She stood up and drove them about the meadow till the bride-elect came to the window, and was so charmed with the little chicks made of gold that she came down and asked if she could have them cheap.

"No, not for gold untold," was the answer, "only for flesh and blood. Let me sleep another night in the prince's bedchamber."

The bride said, "Yes," intending to cheat her as on the previous evening. But when the prince went to bed he asked his valet what the murmuring and rushing noise he had heard last night meant.

The valet told him all, viz., that they had given him a sleeping draught because a poor, wandering girl had secreted herself in his room, and they were to give him another draught to-night.

The prince said, "Pour it out on the floor by my bed." And when the girl was led in again and began to relate her story, he recognised the voice of his true wife, jumped up and cried, "Now, and only now am I really released. Everything has been like a dream, and the strange princess, who was a crocodile, has bewitched me, and made me forget you. But God has shown me my folly at the right moment."

So the two slipped secretly out of the castle in the middle of the night, for they were afraid of being caught by the princess's father, who was a magician. They swung themselves on the back of the great bird Grief, who took them over the Red Sea. In the middle of the ocean she dropped a nut and a great tree grew up, on which the bird rested. Then he flew with them to their home, and they found their child now grown big and very beautiful. They lived happy ever after.

THE GOOSE-GIRL

Once upon a time there lived an old queen, whose consort had died many years ago, and she had a beautiful daughter. As the child grew up she became renowned, and was betrothed to a prince. When the time drew near for their nuptials, and for the princess's departure to the foreign country, the old queen gave her much costly furniture, and many ornaments, gold and silver, goblets and jewels—in fact, everything that could be wanted for a royal dowry, for she loved her child dearly. Moreover, she gave her a wait-

ing-maid to ride with her, and to deliver the bride into the bridegroom's hands ; each of them was given a horse for the journey, but the princess's horse was called Falada, and could speak.

When the hour of departure arrived, the old mother betook herself to her bedroom, and, taking up a little knife, cut her fingers with this so that they bled ; then she held a little white handkerchief underneath, letting those drops of blood fall on it, and gave them to her daughter, saying, "Dear child, guard them carefully, they will be of use to you on the way."

Both then took a sad farewell of each other, the princess put the handkerchief in her bosom, mounted her horse, and forthwith set out to her bridegroom. When they had ridden for an hour, she was seized with a parching thirst, and called out to her serving-maid, "Get off and fetch me some water out of the brook with my own cup you brought for me. I should like to take a drink."

"If you are thirsty," said the waiting-maid, "get down yourself, and lie on the water's edge and drink. I do not care to be your servant."

The princess got down from sheer thirst, bent over the brook and drank, but did not dare do so out of the golden cup. She said meanwhile to herself, "Oh, my God !" to which the three drops of blood answered, "If your mother knew of this it would break her heart."

The royal bride, however, was humble, and mounted her horse again without a word. They rode thus a few more miles, but the day was warm and the sun scorching, so that she soon grew thirsty again. As they had now come to a river she called again to her serving-maid, "Get off and give me water to drink out of my golden cup," for she had forgotten any disagreeable words between them long ago. But the serving-maid said, still more arrogantly, "If you want to drink, drink alone, I do not care to be your maid."

The princess got down again because of her great thirst, leant over the flowing water and wept, saying, "Oh, my God !" and the drops of blood answered again, "If your mother knew of this it would break her heart." And as she drank thus and bent over, the handkerchief containing the three drops fell out of her bosom and floated down the

water without her noticing it in her great anxiety. However, the chamber-maid had been watching, and was glad to think she would acquire a certain power over the bride ; for as soon as the latter had lost the drops of blood she became weak and helpless. When she wanted to mount her horse again, called Falada, the chamber-maid said, "Falada belongs to me, you can ride my nag," and she had to give in to this arrangement. Furthermore, the chamber-maid ordered the princess to take off her queenly robes and put on the common ones she herself had been wearing ; at last she was even made to swear, under the open heaven, that she would speak to no one at the royal court of what had taken place. If she had not taken this oath she would have been put to death on the spot. But Falada saw all and bore it in mind.

The chamber-maid now mounted Falada and the true bride the common nag, and thus they continued their way till eventually they entered the royal castle. There was great rejoicing over their arrival, and the prince sprang towards them, lifted the chamber-maid from her horse, believing she was his betrothed. She was led up the stairs, while the real princess had to remain standing down below. The old king was looking out of the window and saw her waiting in the courtyard, and saw, too, how attractive she was, gentle, and quite beautiful, and forthwith went into the royal chamber and asked the bride about the one who accompanied her standing below in the yard, and who she was.

"I picked her up on the way for company ; give the maid some work to do, that she may not stand idle."

But the old king had no work for her, and knew nothing, so that he said, "I have a little lad who minds the geese, she might help him." The lad was called Conrad, and the true bride was obliged to help him tend the geese.

Soon, however, the false bride said to the young prince, "Dearest consort, I pray you do me a favour."

He replied, "I will do so willingly."

"Then let the flayer be called to cut the throat of the horse I have been riding, because it annoyed me on the way."

In reality, however, she feared that the horse might speak and betray her designs with the princess.

Now when the order had gone forth that the faithful Falada must die, it came to the ears of the real princess, and she secretly promised to pay the flayer a piece of gold if he would do her a small service. In the town there was a great gloomy gate, through which she had to pass every morning and evening with the geese, "and under this gloomy gate," said she, "would he nail Falada's head, that she might see it from time to time." The flayer, therefore, promised to do so, cut off the head and nailed it securely under the dark gateway.

Early in the morning as she and little Conrad went through the gateway, she said in passing, "Oh, Falada, you who are hanging there."

And the head answered—

"Oh, maiden queen, you who go by,
If your mother only knew
It would surely break her heart."

Then she went along silently out of the town, and they both drove the geese into the field. And when she had come to the meadow, she sat down and did up her hair, which was of pure gold, and little Conrad looked on, delighted to see how it shone, and wanted to pull out a few hairs. Whereupon she said—

"Blow, blow, little breezes,
Take off Conrad's cap,
And let him chase it
Till I have combed and braided my hair
And bound it up again."

And there came such a strong wind that it blew Conrad's cap all over the country, and he had to run after it. By the time he came back she had finished combing and doing up her hair, and he could not catch a single lock. Conrad then got cross, and did not speak to her; and thus they watched over the geese till evening drew on, then they went home.

The next morning as they passed through the dark gate, the maiden said, "Oh, Falada, you who are hanging there."

Falada answered—

"Oh, maiden queen, you who are going by,
If your mother only knew
It would surely break her heart."

And out in the country she sat down again in the meadow and began to comb out her hair, and little Conrad ran forward to seize it, when she said quickly—

"Blow, blow, little breezes,
Take off Conrad's cap,
And let him chase it
Till I have combed and braided my hair
And bound it up again."

Then the wind blew the cap off his head far away, so that Conrad had to run after it a long time. And when he came back she had finished her hair a good while ago, so that he could not take out any; and so they tended the geese till evening.

But in the evening, after they had come home, Conrad went up to the old king, saying, "I will not tend the geese any longer with the girl."

"Why?" said the old king.

"Indeed, she annoys me all day long."

Then the old king bade him relate what she had done to him.

Conrad replied, "In the morning when we go through the dark gateway with the flock, she says to a nag's head that is on the wall, 'Falada, you are hanging there,' to which the head answers—

"'Oh, you queen's child who are passing by,
If your mother only knew
It would surely break her heart.'"

And Conrad proceeded to relate what happened in the goose field, and how he had to run after his hat in the wind.

The old king bade him go out again the next day, and he himself, when it was morning, placed himself behind the dark gate, and heard how she talked with Falada's head; and then he followed her into the meadow and hid himself in a bush. Then he soon saw

with his own eyes how the goose-girl and boy drove the flock, and after a while she sat down and let her hair loose, which shone in the light. She at once repeated—

"Blow, blow, little winds,
Take off Conrad's cap,
And let him chase it
Till I have combed and braided my hair
And bound it up again."

There came a gust of wind which rushed off with Conrad's cap so that he had to run a long way, and the maiden quietly went on combing and braiding her tresses, the old king observing everything meanwhile. Thereupon he went back unnoticed; and when the goose-girl came home in the evening, called her to his side and asked why she had done all this.

"That I dare not tell you. I dare not complain to any one of my woes, for I have sworn under the free heaven not to do so, or else I should have lost my life."

He urged her and left her no peace, but could get nothing out of her. Then he said, "If you will tell me nothing, relate your woes to the iron stove over there."

So she crept into the oven, and began to weep and lament, saying, "Here I sit forsaken by every one, and am yet a king's daughter, and a false chamber-maid compelled me by force to take off my regal clothes, and has taken my place by my bridegroom, and I have to do menial work as a goose-girl. If my mother knew of it her heart would break."

Now the old king stood outside by the stove-pipe watching her and heard what she said. He then came back into the room, and told her to get out of the stove. He had her arrayed in royal robes and it was wonderful how lovely she looked. The old king called his son, and explained to him that he had the wrong bride; she was only a chamber-maid, while the real one stood there as the former goose-girl.

The young prince was delighted when he discovered her beauty and virtue, and a great feast was arranged for, to which all the people and good friends were invited. The bridegroom sat at the head, with the princess on one side,

and the chamber-maid on the other ; but the chamber-maid was dazzled and did not recognise the former in her gorgeous array.

When they had eaten and drunk, and were in good humour, the old king propounded a riddle to the chamber-maid, what such an one was worth who had betrayed her master in such and such a manner, recounting the whole story, and asked, "What judgment does such an one deserve ?"

The false bride replied, "She deserves nothing better than to have all her clothes taken away, and put into a barrel studded inside with pointed nails ; and two white horses should draw it, and drag her from street to street till she died."

"You are she," said the old king, "and have pronounced your own sentence, and shall be dealt with accordingly."

And while this sentence was being carried out the young prince married his right bride, and both governed their kingdom in peace and happiness.

THE YOUNG GIANT

A PEASANT had a son who was no bigger than his father's thumb. He did not grow ; and several years had passed away, and he had not increased one hair's breadth in stature.

One day when his father was going out to work in the fields, the little fellow said to him, "Father, I want to go out with you."

"To go out with me ?" said the father. "You'd only be in our way out in the fields ; and besides, you might easily be lost."

But the little man now began to cry ; and in order to have peace, his father put him in his pocket and carried him away as he wished. When they came to the place where the father was to work, the peasant set his little son down in a newly turned furrow.

While they were there a great giant came stalking down from over the brow of the mountain. "Do you see

as it was done. "Ah, that will do," said he, "I see a good mouthful there." And he devoured the whole of it, and yet his hunger was not appeased.

Then he said to his father, "I see very well I shall not find enough to eat here. Only get me a bar of iron, so strong that I can't break it against my knee, and I'll go out into the world to seek my fortune."

The peasant was delighted at the offer. He harnessed his two horses to his waggon, and brought home a bar of iron so great and so thick, that the horses had much ado to drag it along. The young man took it, and—*crick !* he broke it across his knee like a lath, and threw the pieces on each side of him. The father then harnessed four horses, and brought home a bar of iron they could scarcely move. But the son broke it against his knee like the last, and said, "This one, too, is good for nothing. Go and get me a stronger one." At last the peasant harnessed eight horses, and brought home a mass that all the eight could but just drag. When the son had taken it in his hands, he broke off a little piece at the end, and said, "I see very well that you can't procure me such a bar of iron as I require. I shall go out of your house."

So he turned out into the world as a working smith. He came to a village where there was a smith, a great miser, who never gave anything away to any one, but always wanted to keep everything for himself. The young man presented himself at this man's forge, and asked for work. The smith was delighted to see such a powerful young fellow ; for he calculated that he would wield his hammer lustily, and earn his money well. "What wages do you want ?" he asked.

"None," replied the workman, "only at the end of each fortnight, when you pay the other men, I am to be allowed to give you two blows with my fist, which you shall be obliged to receive."

The miser was much pleased with the bargain, by which he would save his money. The next day the new workman was to give his first hammer-stroke. When the master had brought the bar of red-hot iron, he let his hammer fall on it with such a crash that the bar was crushed, and the iron flew into splinters ; and as for the anvil, it was

driven into the earth in such a way that it could never be got out again. Then the master said to him, in anger, "You won't do for me ; you hit too hard. What am I to pay you for the one stroke you have struck ?"

"I only require to give you a little tap ; nothing more."

And he gave him a kick which sent him flying over four waggons of hay. Then he looked out the biggest bar of iron he could find in the forge, and taking it in his hand like a walking-stick, he set out again on his travels.

A little farther on he came to a farm, and asked the farmer if he did not want a foreman.

"Yes," said the farmer, "I want one. You seem to me a sturdy fellow, and one who knows his duty. But how much wages do you want ?"

The other replied that he wanted no wages at all, but only required permission to give the farmer three blows, which the farmer agreed to receive. He was delighted with his bargain, for he, too, was a miser.

Next morning there was wood to be brought from the forest. The other farm-servants were up and stirring, but our friend was still lying in his bed. One of them called out to him, "Get up, it is time ; we are going to the forest, and you must go with us."

But he answered roughly, "You go first ; I shall be back before you."

The others went to the farmer, and told him that his foreman was still in bed, and would not accompany them to the forest.

The farmer told them to go and call him again, and to order him to harness the horses.

But the foreman replied again, "You go first ; I shall be back before you."

He remained in bed two hours longer ; at the end of that time he got up, gathered two bushels of peas, and prepared himself a mess which he ate quietly, and then harnessed the horses to go to the forest. To get there he had to pass through a hollow way. He drove his cart through first, and then stopping the horses, he went behind them and blocked up the road with felled trees and bushes so that no one could get past. As he entered the forest the

others were coming away with their loaded waggons. "Go on, go on," said he; "I shall be home before you." And without going further, he contented himself with pulling up two enormous trees, which he flung on his waggon, and then took the road towards home. When he came to the barrier he had made he found the other waggons stopping there unable to get past. "Well," said he, "if you had stayed at home this morning as I did you would have had an hour's sleep the more, and would have got home none the later this evening." And as his horses could not get forward, he unharnessed them, put them in the waggon, and taking hold of the pole, dragged it all through like a handful of feathers. When he had got to the other side he said, "You see I can get out of the scrape quicker than you." And he went on his way without waiting for them. When he got to the yard he took a tree in his hand and showed it to the farmer. "Is that not a handsome log?" said he.

The farmer said to his wife, "He's a good servant; if he starts later than the rest, he gets back before them."

He served the farmer for a year. When the year was out, and the other servants received their wages, he asked to be allowed to pay himself. But the farmer, horribly frightened at the prospect of the blows he should receive, begged hard to be let off, declaring that he would rather become a servant to his own foreman, and let the latter be farmer in his place. "No," replied he, "I won't be a farmer; I'm a foreman, and I mean to remain as I am. But what has been arranged must be carried out."

The farmer offered to give him anything he should ask; but it was all in vain; he always answered "No." The farmer, not knowing what in the world to do, asked a respite of a fortnight, to find some way out of the difficulty, and the young man granted his request. Then the farmer called together all his servants and asked their advice. After mature consideration they answered that with such a foreman no one was certain of his life, for that he could kill a man as he would a fly. They were therefore of opinion that he should be let down into the well under pretext of cleaning it; and while he was at the bottom certain millstones, which were kept near that

place, should be thrown down upon his head so as to kill him on the spot.

The advice pleased the farmer, and the foreman made ready to go down into the well. When he was at the bottom they threw down enormous millstones upon him and thought they had crushed his head ; but he called from below, " Drive away your fowls from up there. They're scratching up the sand, and are throwing grains of it into my eyes ; I'm half blinded with it."

The farmer cried " Hitch, hitch," as if he were scaring fowls away.

When the foreman had finished his work and come to the surface, he cried, " Look at my fine collar ! " It was the largest of the millstones which he was wearing round his neck.

The foreman continued asking for his wages, but the farmer stood out for another fortnight's grace. His counsellors advised him to send the young man to the enchanted mill, to grind his meal during the night ; for no one had got away alive the next morning. This advice pleased the farmer, and he immediately ordered his servant to take eight bushels of corn to the mill and to grind it during the night because it was required at once. The foreman put two bushels of corn into his right-hand pocket, and two into his left, and packed the other four in a wallet, two behind and two before ; and thus loaded he set off for the mill. The miller told him that one could grind there in the daytime, but not at night ; and that those who had ventured to do so had all been found dead the next morning. " I shall not die of it," said he ; " go you to bed and sleep as soundly as you like." And going into the mill he began to grind his corn as if nothing were amiss.

Towards eleven o'clock at night he went into the miller's counting-house, and sat down on the bench. An instant afterwards the door opened of itself, and a table came rolling in all by itself, and on it bottles and dishes ranged themselves, filled with good things, without any one appearing to bring them. The stools also posted themselves round the table, and still no one appeared. But at last the young man saw a number of fingers, and nothing

else, filling the plates and moving to and fro about over them with knives and forks. As he was hungry and saw the dishes smoking, he took his seat at the table and ate to his heart's content.

When he had finished supper, and the empty plates announced that the invisible guests had done the same, he distinctly heard the noise of blowing out the candles, and indeed they were out all together. Then, in the darkness, he all at once felt something like a box on the ear. Then he said aloud, "If there's any more of this I'll play at it too." He however received a second, which he returned. This giving and receiving blows continued all night long, and the young giant did not spare his strength at the sport. At daybreak all ceased. The miller arrived and was astonished to find him still alive. "I've enjoyed myself immensely," said the giant. "I've received some thwacks, but I've returned them."

The miller was delighted, for his mill was disenchanted; and he wanted to give the giant a quantity of money to show his gratitude.

"Money!" said he, "I won't have it—I've more than I want already." And taking his sacks of flour on his back he went home to the farm and told the farmer that he had fulfilled his commission and wanted his wages.

The farmer was greatly frightened. He could not remain quiet, but kept walking up and down the room, and large drops of perspiration stood on his forehead. To get a little air he opened the window; but before he had time to suspect anything, the foreman gave him a blow which sent him flying out of the window into the air, where he continued mounting up and up till they lost sight of him. Then the foreman said to the farmer's wife, "Now it's your turn; the second blow shall be for you."

She cried, "No, no! women ought not to be struck." And she opened the other window, for she, too, was in a perspiration from fear; but she received a blow which sent her up into the air, higher than her husband, because she was much lighter. Her husband called to her, "Come with me;" and she replied, "You come with me; I cannot get to you." And they continued to mount

through the air without being able to rejoin each other; and perhaps they're mounting up still.

As for the young giant, he took his iron bar and set out again on his journey.

THE EARTH MANIKIN

THERE was once a wealthy king who had three daughters who took exercise every day in the castle garden, where there were many tall and beautiful trees. If you plucked an apple off one of these and bit it you at once sank a hundred feet into the earth. So people were forbidden to pick the fruit. In the autumn the apples on this particular tree became as red as blood. Every day the three daughters stood under the branches to see if the wind had blown down any of the fruit, but none fell, although some of the twigs touched the earth, the tree was so laden. The youngest of the three sisters was seized with a great longing to taste one of the apples, and said to the others, "Our father loves us far too well to let us be punished for picking an apple; he has only made the rule for strangers, I am sure." The child then picked a big red apple, and after biting it, cried, "Just taste, dear sisters. It is the sweetest, juiciest apple you can imagine. Never in my life have I tasted anything so delicious." Then both the other princesses bit the apple, and instantly they all sank into the earth, and not a single hair of them was to be seen.

At midday the king sent for them, but they were nowhere to be found, though castle and garden were ransacked. Then the king ordered the whole country to be searched, and promised that whoever found his daughters, should be given the hand of one in marriage. Quite a crowd of young people started off to look—for every one was fond of the three maidens, they were so pretty and frank and friendly in their manners. Among the search party were three young huntsmen who, after they had journeyed for eight days, arrived at a great castle in which there were spacious apartments. In one of the rooms a table was covered with tempting dishes, so hot that they steamed, but not a soul

was to be seen in the whole castle. They waited half a day and the food kept hot and continued to steam, until at last their hunger became so intense that they could not resist satisfying it. Then they decided to remain in the castle, and arranged that two should stop at home while the other went out to search for the three lost daughters. The lot fell to the eldest the first day. But the next the two youngest went out to search, and the eldest was obliged to stay in. At midday there came a tiny little man to fetch bread, and the huntsman cut him a round, but directly he handed it to the little man he dropped it, and then demanded that it should be picked up. The huntsman stooped to obey, and the little man took his stick and, holding him by the hair, administered three heavy blows. The next time he was left at home he fared no better. When the other two came back they said to the eldest—

"How have you got on?"

"Why, badly," was the answer; and he related what had happened.

The third day the youngest stayed at home, and the tiny little man came and asked for bread, and when he was given a slice dropped it, and ordered that it should be picked up as before.

Then the youngest brother said to the little man, "If you can't take the trouble to do it yourself you are not worth your daily bread."

Then the little fellow grew furious and insisted that he should do it for him; but the other still refused, and took hold of the little man's coat, thrashed him, and threatened to turn him out.

"Leave go, leave go," he screamed, "and I'll show you the place where the princesses are hidden."

When the youth heard this he left off drubbing the little man, who informed him that he was an earth manikin, and if he would accompany him he would show him where the three lost princesses were. He then showed him a well in which the water was dried up, and said—

"Your companions do not mean to act honestly, so if you would rescue the three maidens you must go alone. The two others would, of course, like to find the three daughters,

but they have not the courage for the enterprise. You must take a great basket and must sit in it with a dagger and bell, and let yourself down. Underneath you will find three rooms, in each will be a princess guarded by a dragon with several heads. You must cut off the heads."

When he had given these instructions the earth manikin vanished.

At evening when the two others returned they asked how their brother had fared at home all alone.

He said, "Oh, pretty well. I was eating my lunch at noon when a strange little fellow came and begged for a slice of bread, and on my giving it to him he let it fall and told me to pick it up. I didn't see it, and on his becoming insolent I thrashed him, and he revealed to me where the princesses were hidden."

The two were dreadfully annoyed at this and grew green and yellow from jealousy.

The next morning, however, they all three cast lots at the empty well as to which should sit in the basket. The lot fell to the eldest, who seated himself and took the bell. He said, "If I ring you two must draw me up quickly." He was lowered and rang immediately, so they drew him up. The next lot fell to the youngest. He was lowered, and when he got out of the basket he took his dagger and stood at the door of the first room listening. He heard the dragon snore distinctly, broke open the door, and saw one of the princesses sitting surrounded by nine dragons' heads. He raised his dagger and cut off the nine heads. The princess sprang up and threw her arms round his neck and kissed him rapturously. Then he went on to the next and found her in company of a dragon with seven heads. These he cut off, and came to the third princess, whose dragon had four heads, which he dispatched likewise. Then all three of the king's daughters surrounded and hugged and thanked him for their deliverance. He rang the bell so loud that it was heard above and he put the princesses one after the other in the basket and they were all three drawn up. Then the words that the earth manikin had spoken about his brothers not meaning to act honestly occurred to him. So he took a huge stone, and laid it in the basket. It was drawn about half-way up,

then the wicked brothers cut the rope, and the basket and the stone fell heavily to the ground.

The brothers, thinking he was in it, ran off with the princesses, making them promise to tell the king they had delivered them.

Then the king offered them the hands of his daughters in marriage.

Meanwhile the youngest huntsman wandered about underground in the three chambers, thinking he must die, when suddenly he saw a flute hanging on the wall. "What is the good of you hanging in this sad place, flute?" he said. "Here you cannot tune up." Then he looked at the dragons' heads. "You cannot help me, either," he said. He walked up and down so many times that the ground became smooth and slippery. It then struck him he might amuse himself by taking the flute from the wall and blowing a tune on it. All at once up rose earth manikins, one for every note he played, till the room was choke-full of manikins.

They all asked him what he wished, and he said he wanted to go up on the earth again and see daylight. So each caught hold of a hair of his head and then lifted him up on the earth.

When he was there he made at once for the king's castle, where the marriage festivities of one of the daughters were already being celebrated.

The three daughters on seeing him became quite faint.

The king was angry, thinking he had done his children some harm, and ordered him to prison.

But when the princesses came to themselves they besought that he might be set at liberty.

The king asked why they wanted him set free, and they said they could not tell him, but if he went and listened at the stove-pipe he would hear all. He went, and the result was that the two wicked brothers were sent to the gallows, and the good one was given the youngest princess.

At her wedding she wore a pair of glass slippers, which were cracked because she stepped on a stone on her way from the church.

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN MOUNT

A MERCHANT had two children, a boy and a girl, who were both small and couldn't walk. Two ships laden with rich cargoes belonging to the merchant set out across the seas, and in a few days the news came that they had sunk. Now, instead of being a rich man, he was a very poor one, and had nothing left but an acre of ground in the town. To try and distract his thoughts a little from his misfortune he went out to walk in his allotments, and as he paced up and down he noticed a small black manikin standing near him. The manikin asked what was the matter and why he looked so sad.

"If you can help me," said the merchant, "I will tell you all."

"Who knows?" was the answer. "I may be able to help you."

So the merchant told him his whole fortune had gone to the bottom of the sea and he had nothing left but this piece of ground.

"Don't distress yourself," said the tiny man. "If you promise me to bring whatever your foot strikes against first when you go home to this spot in twelve years' time, you shall have as much money as you want."

The merchant thought, "It will certainly be my dog," never dreaming it might be his little boy. So he gave the black manikin his hand on it and went home. As he came into his house his small son was so rejoiced to see him that he jumped up on the chairs, waved his arms, lost balance, and fell off at his father's feet. The father was frightened, remembering his promise, and knew now what he had signed away, but as his empty cash boxes had still no money in them, he believed the manikin had been joking. A month later he went up to the attic to look for some old deeds he wished to sell, and there he saw great piles of gold. Now he was on his legs again, and became a much richer and more influential merchant than before.

The boy grew up clever and bright, and as the twelve years passed the merchant became more and more anxious, so that his face changed and looked careworn. Then the son asked him one day what was the matter. His father

did not like to tell him, but he urged him to do so persistently, and at last he owned that, without knowing what he did, he had promised him to a black man in exchange for vast sums of money. He had signed an agreement about it, and when the twelve years were up he would be obliged to part with him.

Then the boy said, "Never mind, father. The black man will have no power over me."

The son was blessed by the priest, and when the hour came went up to the allotments, and the son made a circle and placed himself with his father inside it. The black manikin appeared and asked the father, "Have you brought me what you promised?"

He was silent, but his son said to the little old man, "What do you want here?"

He replied, "It's your father I have to deal with, not you."

"You have cheated and deceived my father," answered the son. "Give him back his agreement."

"No," said the black man. "I will have my rights."

They conversed a long time, and the end of it was that, as the son now neither belonged to his father nor to the arch-fiend, he was to be put in a boat and launched on a swiftly flowing stream, and his father was to kick off the boat with his foot and leave him on the face of the waters. They took farewell of each other, and the son placed himself in the boat. The father kicked it off, and the boat whirled round and round upside down, and, thinking his son had perished, the father went home and mourned for him.

The little boat, however, did not sink, but floated on, and the youth kept safely inside it till the boat stopped on an unknown shore. He landed and saw a beautiful castle not far off, to which he directed his footsteps. But on entering it he found it bewitched. He went through all the rooms, and found no one till he came to the last. In it there was a big snake coiled up, which was a bewitched girl. She received him with joy, saying, "You must be the prince, my deliverer, for whom I have waited twelve years. The whole kingdom is spellbound, and you must save it."

"How am I to do that?" he inquired.

"To-night," she answered, "twelve black men will come hung with chains; they will ask you what you are doing here. You must remain silent and let them do what they like to you. They will bully, beat, and sting you, but you must let it all happen and say not a word. At twelve they will be obliged to go away. The next night twelve more will come, and the next four-and-twenty, who will chop off your head. Then their power will be over, and if you have endured all without speaking one single little word, I shall be free from my spell. I will then come to you with a bottle of the water of life, with which I will anoint you, and you will be well and strong as before."

He answered, "I will willingly do all this to release you," and everything happened as she had described it. The black men couldn't extract a word from him, and in the third night the snake turned into a beautiful princess, who brought him the water of life and put on his head again. She then threw her arms round his neck, kissed him, and the whole country rejoiced. They were married, and he became the King of the Golden Mount. They lived contentedly together, and the queen gave birth to a pretty boy.

Eight years had gone by when he remembered his father, and thought of him with affection and longed to go and see him again. The queen did not wish him to leave her, but he gave her no peace till she consented.

At parting she presented him with a wishing-ring, and said, "Take this ring, put it on your finger, and everything will come as you desire. Only you must promise one thing, and that is not to use the ring to wish me to come from here to your father's."

He promised, slipped the ring on his finger, and at once wished to be conveyed to the town where his father lived. Instantly he found himself in front of the town gates, but the sentinels refused to let him in, because he looked suspicious in his splendid clothes and jewels. So he went to a mountain-side, where a shepherd sat with his flock, and changed clothes with him. In the shepherd's old smock he entered the town undisturbed. When he reached his father's house his father wouldn't believe he was his son, saying he never had more than one son, and he was dead

long ago, but as he was a poor, needy shepherd he would give him a plate of food. Then the shepherd said to his parents, "I am positively your son. Is there no mark on my body you could know me by?"

"Yes," said his mother. "Our son had a strawberry mark under his right arm."

He pulled back his shirt and showed them a strawberry mark under his right arm, and his parents had no further doubts that he was their son. He then related his adventures, and how he was now King of the Golden Mount, and his wife a beautiful princess, and their child a pretty little boy of seven years old.

"Indeed! You expect me to believe that?" exclaimed his father. "A fine king wearing a dirty, ragged smock!"

Then his son grew angry, turned the ring on his finger without thinking of his promise, and wished his wife and child to come to him. The same moment they appeared, but the queen cried and wrung her hands, saying that he had broken his promise to her and made her very unhappy. He said, "I did it unintentionally and with no bad motive," and talked her over; but, though she seemed consoled, she really was cherishing a wicked design.

He led her outside the town and showed her the water on which he had been cast adrift in the little boat, and then said, "I am tired; let us sit down, and I will rest my head in your lap." So he laid his head in her lap, and she cooed him to sleep, and while he slept she drew the ring from his finger and her legs from under him, stood up, and wished herself with her child back in her kingdom. When he awoke he was lying quite alone and forsaken, his wife and child gone, and the ring off his finger.

"Home to your parents you cannot go," he said to himself. "They will think you a magician. The best thing to do is to set off for your kingdom without delay." So he started and came to a mountain, before which stood three giants quarrelling over their father's inheritance. As they saw him going by they shouted out, "Insignificant men sometimes have sound common sense. Come and decide how our inheritance shall be divided."

The inheritance consisted first of a sword which, when you took it in your hand and said, "All heads off except mine," every one else's head fell into the dust; secondly, of a mantle which, when you put it on, made you invisible; and thirdly, of a pair of boots, directly you stood in which you would find yourself at the place you wanted to go to in a second.

He said to the giants, "Let me see your three pieces of property and test their condition."

They handed him the mantle, and he became invisible, and took the form of a fly. Then he resumed his own shape, and remarked, "The mantle is all right. Now let me try the sword."

They said, "No. If we give you that, you'll say, 'All heads off except mine,' and we shall lose ours." But they gave it to him at last on condition that he would try it on a tree. He did this, and the sword cut the trunk in two, as if it had been a blade of grass.

Now he wanted the boots too, but they said, "No. If you put them on and wished yourself on top of the mountains, you'd be there and we should be left below with nothing." But he assured them he would not act thus. So they gave him the boots.

Directly he was in possession of all three things he thought only of his wife and child, and murmured, "How I wish I were on the golden mountain!" and away he vanished before the giants' very eyes whose inheritance was thus disposed of.

As he drew near the castle he heard sounds of music and revelry, and people told him his wife was going to be married to another. He became very angry and said, "False and perfidious creature! She has deceived me and stole away while I slept."

He then flung on his mantle and made an invisible entry into the castle, where he found a great table in the banqueting-hall spread with all manner of dainties. The guests ate, drank, laughed, and made merry, and the queen sat on her royal throne arrayed in magnificent garments, with the crown on her head. He stationed himself behind her, and whenever she helped herself to a piece of meat he took it off her plate, and whenever her glass was filled

with wine he took the glass up and emptied it. The lacqueys went on supplying their mistress with food and drink, but she never had anything, and became at last so full of shame and consternation that she retired to her boudoir and wept.

Still invisible, he followed her and heard her say, "Is the devil still haunting me? Did my deliverer never come after all?"

Then he struck her in the face and repeated, "Did my deliverer never come? It is he who is haunting you, traitress! Have I deserved such treatment?" He went back into the hall, revealed himself, and cried, "The wedding feast is at an end; the real king has returned."

The monarchs, princes, and statesmen who were assembled there scoffed and jeered at him, but he said shortly, "Are you going or not?" They then tried to lay hold on him, but he drew his sword and exclaimed, "All heads off except mine!" whereupon all the distinguished heads rolled on the floor, and he was master of the situation and again King of the Golden Mount.

THE RAVEN

THERE was once a queen who had one little daughter, a baby in arms. At one time the child took a naughty fit, and the mother, do what she would, could not keep it quiet. She became impatient, and because there were ravens flying round the castle she opened the window and said, "I wish you were a raven, child; then you would fly away, and I should have a little peace."

Scarcely were the words out of her mouth than the baby was turned into a raven, and flew from her arms out of the window. It flew to a dark forest, and remained there so long that the parents heard nothing of their child. Once a man whose path lay through this wood heard the raven call, and followed the direction the voice came from, and as he came nearer the raven said, "I am a princess by birth, and have been transformed. You can, if you like, give me back my human form."

"What shall I do?" he asked.

She said, "Go further into the wood, and you will find a house in which is an old woman who will offer you food and drink, but you mustn't accept, for if you eat or drink under her roof you will fall into a deep slumber and won't be able to help me. In the garden behind the house is a large rabbit-hutch. You must stand on it and wait for me. For three days I shall come every afternoon at two o'clock in a carriage, which first will be drawn by four white mares, the second day by four red, and the last day by four black, but if you are asleep and not awake I shall be left still spellbound."

The man promised to do all that she desired. But the raven said, "I know you will not release me. You will be sure to take something from the woman."

The man promised again that he would not touch food or drink. But when he came into the house the old woman came to meet him, saying, "Poor fellow, how tired you are! Come and refresh yourself, and eat and drink."

"No," said the man. "I will neither eat nor drink."

But the cunning old soul would not leave him alone, and said, "If you won't, you will at least take a sip out of this glass—that is nothing."

So he let himself be talked over and drank. In the afternoon, towards two o'clock, he went into the garden and climbed on the hutch in order to wait for the raven. But he suddenly became so tired he couldn't help lounging a little, but still he intended to keep awake. No sooner had he stretched out his limbs than his eyes closed and he went to sleep, and slept so sound that nothing in the world could have awoke him. At two o'clock the raven came with four white mares, and she said to herself sorrowfully, "I am sure he is asleep." And when she stood by the hutch in the garden, there he lay asleep. She got out of the carriage, went up to him, and shook and called him, but he did not wake.

The next day at dinner-time the old woman came and pressed him to partake of food and drink, but he refused. And again she plagued him, and at last got him to take one sip from the glass. Towards two o'clock he took up his position on the hutch, but could not keep on his feet,

lay down, and went to sleep as before. As the raven drew near drawn by four red mares she said to herself, "I am sure he is asleep." She got out of the carriage, went up to him, shook and called him, but in vain.

The third day the old woman once more begged the man to eat and drink, and asked him why he abstained. Did he want to die of starvation?

He answered, "I won't and mayn't eat and drink."

However, she set down the tray beside him, and the smell of the food rose to his nostrils so that he could resist no longer. At the appointed time he went into the garden and waited on the rabbit-hutch for the king's daughter, but before she came he was overcome with fatigue and drowsiness, and slept as sound as a top. At two o'clock the raven drove up in a black carriage drawn by black mares, very sad, for she knew beforehand he would be asleep. She shook and called him, but failed to wake him. She then laid a roll beside him, a piece of meat, and a bottle of wine, for now he might eat and drink as much as he liked, for it wouldn't matter. She also took a gold ring from her finger and put it on his, and on the ring her name was engraved. Lastly she laid a letter near him, in which she enumerated the things she had given him, and added, "I see you will never release me here from my spell, but will you do it in the golden castle of Stromberg? You can if you like." And then she got into her carriage and drove to the golden castle of Stromberg.

When the man awoke and discovered he had been sleeping he was sick at heart and said, "She has by this time driven away, and I have not released her."

Then his eye fell on the things lying beside him, and he read the letter, which explained what had happened. He got up and started off for the castle of Stromberg, but he didn't know in which direction it lay. So for a long time he wandered about in the world, and then lost himself in a dense forest, in which he had been fourteen days, when one evening he lay down tired out and slept on some brambles. The next day he wandered on, and at evening, when he was going to lay himself down again to rest, he heard a howling and weeping which kept him awake; and when the hour came at which people light

up, he saw a shimmer, and rose, and followed it. He came to a house which looked very small because a giant stood in front of it. He thought, "If you attempt to go in, the giant will probably make an end of you." At last he plucked up the courage to advance.

The giant said, "It is well that you come. I am hungry, and will swallow you for my supper."

"I should advise you to leave that alone," the man said. "I would rather not be swallowed. If you want food, I can supply you with enough to fill you."

"If that's true," said the giant, "you can make your mind easy. I only wanted to devour you because I had nothing else."

They went in and sat down to the table, and the man produced bread, wine, and meat.

The giant said, "I like this extremely," and ate heartily.

The man then asked, "Can you tell me whereabouts the golden castle of Stromberg is?"

The giant said, "I will look on my map, where every town, village, and house is marked." He fetched his map from the inner room and looked for the castle, but it wasn't to be found. "It doesn't matter," he said. "Upstairs in a cupboard I have other better and larger maps, we'll look on them."

They searched in these without success, and then he fetched more old maps. At last, after diligent searching, they spotted the castle of Stromberg, but it was quite a thousand miles away.

"How shall I get there?" the man asked.

The giant answered, "I happen to have two hours to spare. I will carry you as far as I can into the neighbourhood of it. But then I shall be obliged to return home to feed our child." So the giant carried the man till they were within about a hundred miles' walk of the castle, when he said, "Now you can go the rest of the way alone."

He turned back, leaving the man to walk on day and night till he came to the castle of Stromberg. It stood on a glass mountain, and the bewitched princess drove round and round it and then went in. He rejoiced to see her, and tried to climb up, but every time he began the ascent he slipped back. And when he found it was impossible

to reach her, he was very sorry, and said to himself, "I will stay down here and wait for her." So he built himself a hut, and sat in it a whole year, and every day he saw the princess driving above him round the castle, but was unable to climb the slippery mountain.

Then once he saw from his hut three robbers banging and hitting each other, and he exclaimed, "God be with you!"

They stopped and looked round, but seeing no one, began to fight again.

He called once more, "God be with you!" and they stopped and looked round. "I must go and see what they are fighting about," he said to himself, and came out of his hut.

One told him he had a stick, a blow from which would cause any door to spring open; another that he had a cloak which rendered any one who wore it invisible; and the third said he had caught a horse on which it was possible to ride anywhere you liked, even up the glass mountain. What they couldn't decide was whether they should go shares in these possessions or each take one.

The man suggested that he should test the worth of their property, and if he found it satisfactory he would give them something in exchange for it more valuable than money. So they let him mount the horse, hung the cloak over his shoulders, put the stick in his hand, and the next moment he was out of sight. He gave them violent blows with the stick at parting, and cried out, "You bear-catchers, I hope you are satisfied now."

He rode up the glass mountain and found the castle locked; he hammered on the door with his stick, and it sprang open. He entered, climbed the staircase, and came to a hall in which a young woman sat with a golden goblet of wine in front of her. She couldn't see him because he was wrapped in the cloak, but as he drew near he took the ring from his finger and threw it into the goblet.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "this is my ring. The man must be here who is to set me free."

She got up and searched the whole castle, but nowhere could she find him, for he had gone out, thrown off his

cloak, and remounted his horse. When she came out at the door she beheld him and screamed for joy. He got off his horse and took the princess in his arms. She kissed him, saying, "Now you have released me, and to-morrow we'll be married."

THE PEASANT'S CLEVER DAUGHTER

THERE was once upon a time a poor peasant who had no land—only a little cottage and one daughter; so the daughter said, "We must ask the lord king for a small plot of ground."

When the king heard of their poverty he presented them with a little corner of turf, which she and her father hoed in order to sow a little corn and other grain in it. When they had nearly done their acre, they found in the earth a mortar of pure gold.

"Listen," said the father to the girl. "As our sovereign king has been so gracious and given us this acre we must give him the mortar."

The daughter, however, would not consent to this, and said, "Father, if we have the mortar and not the pestle then we must get hold of a pestle too; therefore it is better to keep silent."

But he would not obey her, and took up the mortar and bore it to the king, saying he had found it on the heath, and would the king honour him by accepting it.

The king took the mortar, and asked if he had found nothing besides.

"No," replied the peasant.

Then the king said he must now produce the pestle as well.

The peasant told him they had not found it, but he might as well have spoken to the wind; he was thrust into prison to remain there till he should produce the pestle. The serving-men who had to bring him bread and water—the usual prison fare—daily, heard the man continually repeating, "Oh, if only I had listened to my daughter! Alas! if only I had listened to my daughter!"

Then the servants went to the king and told him how

the prisoner repeated, "Ah, if I had listened to my daughter!" and would neither eat nor drink. He then ordered his retainers to bring the man to him, and asked him why he kept on saying, "Ah, if I had listened to my daughter!"

"What did your daughter say, then?"

"Indeed, she said I ought not to bring the mortar, or else I should have to procure a pestle."

"If you have such a clever daughter, let her come here."

So she had to appear before the king, who asked her whether she were really so clever, and said he would set her a riddle, which if she solved, he would marry her. She at once promised to guess it.

Then said the king, "Come to me not clothed, not naked, not riding, not driving, not in the road, not out of the road, and if you can do that I will marry you."

Then she went away, divested herself of all her clothes so that she was not dressed; and took a big fishing-net, got into it and wound it all round her so that she was not naked; she borrowed a donkey with some money, and tied the fishing-net to its tail, so that he drew her along, and that was neither riding nor driving; the donkey had to drag her in the cart-ruts so that she only touched the ground with her big toe, and that was neither in the road nor out of it. And when she arrived thus the king said she had solved the riddle and completely carried it out. He then set her father free from prison, and took her to be his wife, putting all his regal possessions at her disposal.

After some years had passed by, the king was once going to parade, when it chanced that some peasants who had been selling wood stopped before the castle with their waggons; some were drawn by oxen and some by horses. One peasant had three horses; one of them had a little foal, that ran away and lay down between two oxen that were in front of the waggon. When the peasants came together they began to quarrel, kicking and shouting. The owner of the oxen wanted to keep the foal, and said it belonged to his oxen; and the other said No, his horses had had it, and it was his. The dispute was laid before

the king, and he decreed that where the foal had lain, there it should remain, and so the owner of the oxen had it, although it did not belong to him. The other man went off weeping and lamenting over his little foal.

Now he had heard that the queen was very gracious because she herself had sprung from the peasant class ; so he went to her and asked if she could not help him recover his foal.

She said, "Yes, if you promise not to betray me, I will tell you what to do. To-morrow morning early, when the king is at parade, place yourself in the middle of the street where he must pass by, take a big fishing-net and pretend to fish, and go on fishing and throwing it out as though it were full," and she told him, moreover, what he should answer when questioned by the king.

So the peasant stood there next day fishing on a dry place. As the king passed by and looked that way he sent his courier to find out what the foolish man meant by it.

He replied, "I am fishing."

The courier asked how he could fish when there was no water there.

"As well," said the peasant, "as two oxen can have a foal, so can I fish in this dry place."

The courier went off and brought the king back this answer. The king sent for the peasant and said to him that could not be his own invention, some one must have told him what to say, and he would know at once who it was. But the peasant did not tell him, and repeated that he had indeed answered of his own accord. However he was laid on a bundle of straw and beaten and ill-treated until he declared that it was the queen who had told him what to say.

When the king came home he said to his wife, "Why are you so deceitful? I do not want you as a wife any longer. Your time is up ; go back to your cottage from whence you came."

Yet he allowed her one thing—she might take what was best and dearest to her, and then she must depart.

She said, "Yes, dear husband, if you command it I will do so," and fell upon his neck, kissing him, and saying she wanted to bid him farewell.

Then she ordered a strong sleeping-draught for their farewell drink together ; the king took a long draught, but she only sipped a little of it. He soon fell into a deep sleep, and when she saw that she called an underling, took a beautiful white linen cloth and wrapped him up in it ; then the servants carried him out to a carriage waiting at the door, and she drove him home to her little cottage. There she laid him on her little bed, and he slept on all day and night, and when he awoke he looked round him, saying, " Bless my soul, wherever am I ! " and called his servants, but none were there.

At last his wife came to the bedside and said, " Dear Liege, you allowed me to take away what was best and dearest to me out of the castle. Now, nothing is better and dearer to me than yourself, so I brought you away with me."

Tears came to the king's eyes, and he said, " Dear wife, you shall be mine, and I will be yours," and took her back to the royal castle, and was betrothed over again to her, and they are probably still living up to the present day.

OLD HILDEBRAND

Once upon a time there lived a peasant and his wife. The priest of the village liked the peasant's wife, and enjoyed her society. His great desire was to spend a whole day with her, and the peasant's wife would have liked it very much too.

The priest said to her one day, " Look here, my friend, I have thought of a good plan. We might spend our day together in this wise. You must pretend to be very ill, and go to bed on Wednesday. Tell your husband you are ill, complain of sickness and feeling faint till Sunday. Then in my sermon on Sunday morning I will give out that whoever has in his house a sick child, husband, wife, father, mother, sister, or brother, as the case may be, shall go on a pilgrimage to Göckelsberg, in Walischland, where a bushel of laurels only costs one kreuzer. If this were done the sick child, husband, wife, father, mother, sister, brother, or whoever it is, would recover instantly."

"I will do it with pleasure," said the peasant woman.

So the following Wednesday the peasant woman went to bed and pretended to be very ill. Her husband brought her all kinds of dainties to tempt her appetite, but in vain; she wouldn't touch any of them.

On Sunday morning she said, "Though I feel sure I am going to die, I should like to get up and go to church to hear the sermon."

"Oh, my good wife," said the peasant, "don't do that. You might make yourself ever so much worse. I tell you what I'll do. I will go to church and listen well to every word the priest says, and tell you all when I come home."

"Very well," said the peasant woman, "but mind you listen to every word."

The peasant went to church, and the priest preached exactly as he had said he would, about any man with a sick member in his household going on the pilgrimage to Göckelsberg and getting a bushel of laurels for one kreuzer, which would act as a cure. He said if any one wished to follow his advice he must come to him after mass, and he would give him the sack for the laurels and a kreuzer.

The peasant was delighted. After mass he went to the priest, who gave him the sack and the kreuzer. Then he hurried home, full of the good news. Before he had crossed the threshold he shouted out, "My good wife, I have such good news; almost as good as if you were already recovered," and he related what the priest had said in his sermon, which of course she knew before. He showed her the sack and the kreuzer for the laurels. "And now I am ready to start at once," he said, "for the sooner I go the quicker you'll get better."

Directly he had turned his back the peasant's wife got up, and the priest came to call. We will, however, leave these two and follow the peasant on his journey. He started at a good pace, so as to reach his destination quickly. Coming towards him he saw his country cousin, a poultry man, coming from the market, where he had been selling eggs.

"Good-day," said the cousin. "Where are you off to in such haste?"

"Good-day," replied the peasant. "My wife was taken ill the other day, and the priest said in his sermon that any one who had a sick wife, father, mother, sister, brother, as the case might be, should go on a pilgrimage to Göckelsburg, and get a sack of laurels for one kreuzer, which would effect an immediate cure. So, you see, I am going."

"But really, friend," said the man, "are you such a simpleton as to believe that? Do you know they want to get rid of you?"

"Dear me!" exclaimed the peasant, "I should like to find out whether what you suggest is true."

"Well, then," answered the cousin, "get into my basket, and I will carry you home so that you can see for yourself. I speak the truth."

The peasant crept into the basket, and the cousin carried him home. When they drew near the house they heard sounds of merry-making. The peasant's wife was busy preparing the supper. She had killed some chickens and baked cakes, and the priest had brought his fiddle.

The cousin knocked at the door, and the peasant woman asked who was there.

"It is I, kinswoman," replied the cousin. "I have been to market and not sold my eggs. It is a heavy load to carry home so late. Will you put me up for the night?"

"Indeed, cousin," said the woman, "you come at an inconvenient moment. I am very busy. But as it is you, you may come in and sit down by the stove."

The cousin obeyed, and put down his basket beside him. The priest and the woman soon became very lively.

The priest said, "My dear friend, you sing so nicely; will you sing to me?"

"Oh," answered the peasant's wife, "I used to sing in my young days, but now I haven't much voice."

But the priest pressed her. "Just one little song, please."

So the peasant's wife sang—

"I have sent my good husband
To the Göckelsberg in Wälischland."

The priest chimed in—

"I wish he would never come back.
What do I want with the laurel sack!"

Then the cousin from his seat behind the stove sang—

"Oh thou, my Hildebrand dear,
What are you doing there?"

(The peasant's name was Hildebrand.)

"I cannot stand this singing any longer, and must come out of my basket," roared the peasant. He then appeared and kicked the priest out of his house.

THE THREE BIRDS

Some thousand years ago there reigned in our country several petty kings. One of these lived in a fine castle on the top of the Kenterberg. His favourite pursuit was hunting. At the foot of the mountain three sisters kept cows, and it happened one day that the king to whom the country belonged came down from his castle to hunt. When the three cow-girls saw the king and his hunters coming, the eldest called out to the others, "Do you see the king? I will marry no one but him."

The second girl, who was on the other side of the mountain, shouted back, "Look at the man at the king's right hand. If I cannot get him I will never marry."

Then the youngest cried out, "The man on the king's left is my choice, he only, and no other man, will I marry."

These two men were the king's ministers. The king heard every word the girls said, and on his return from the hunt he ordered them to be brought up to his castle. He asked them what they had been talking about. Of course they did not like to tell him. So the king said to the eldest, "Would you like to marry me?"

As this was the desire of her heart, she answered "Yes," and in a very short time they were married.

The two sisters married the two ministers. They were all three very pretty girls, especially the queen, who had

very beautiful golden hair. The two sisters had no children. When the king went on a long journey he asked the two sisters to come and stay with the queen at the castle in his absence. The queen had a little son, and the two childless sisters were dreadfully jealous, and wanted to get rid of the child. So they threw it into the river (the river Weser, I believe). No sooner had they done it than a small bird flew up into the air, singing—

"Though ready to die,
I wait further reply.
To the lilies fair I flee.
Brave little boy, is it thee?"

The sisters were alarmed when they heard this, and ran away.

Now when the king came back from his journey they told him a wicked witch had changed the dear little baby boy into a dog. The king was greatly distressed at the news, but said philosophically, "Everything happens for the best."

A poor fisherman and his wife lived near the river, and he chanced to pick up the little boy, and as they had no children of their own, they kept the child.

In a year the king had to go away again, and while he was absent the queen bore a second son. Again the wicked sisters, who were in charge, took the babe, and threw him into the river. And again the small bird flew up and chirruped—

"Though ready to die,
I await reply.
To the lilies fair I flee.
Brave little boy, is it thee?"

And the king on his return was told the same trumped-up story.

The good fisherman found the second little boy too, and brought him up with the other child.

In the course of years the king was obliged to leave home for a third time, and, strange to say, the queen in his absence gave birth to a third babe. This time it was an extremely beautiful little daughter. But the wicked

sisters threw her too into the river, and the little bird sang as before—

"Though ready to die,
I wait further reply.
To the lilies fair I flee.
Brave little maid, is it thee?"

The wicked sisters again trumped up their false tale to the king. This time they said the wicked witch had changed the little baby girl into a cat. On hearing this the king grew angry and complained loudly of the queen's conduct in not being more careful. Indeed he began to think she must be a naughty woman, and ordered her to be thrown into prison.

Meanwhile the children grew up. One day the eldest boy went out fishing with some playfellows. "Go away foundling," said one of them; "we don't wish to associate with you."

The boy, greatly aggrieved, went home, and asked the old fisherman if it was true he was a foundling; and the fisherman told him how he had fished him out of the water. The boy fretted for his parents, and he begged the old man to let him go and look for his father. It was no good the old fisherman asking him to be content and to stay at home, nothing would satisfy him but to start. After walking many miles he came to a large piece of water. An old woman was standing on the bank fishing.

"Good-day, mother," he said. "It will take you a long time to catch a fish at this rate."

"And you," she replied, "will have to search a long time before you find your father. How do you intend to cross the water?"

"Goodness knows!" the boy exclaimed.

Then the old woman took him on her back and carried him over. Afterwards he searched for his father for many a long day.

In a year's time the second son went out to look for his brother. He came to the water too, and what had happened to his brother happened to him.

Now the young girl was the only one left, and she was dull without her brothers, so that she besought the fisher-

man to let her go and look for them. When she too came to the big piece of water, she greeted the old woman, saying, "I hope you will catch a great many fish."

This pleased Goody, and she spoke kindly to the girl, took her over the water, and when on the other side gave her a birch and said, "Go straight on, my child. You will meet a big black dog, but pass him boldly, without fear, and don't laugh at him or kick him. You will then come to a large open castle. When you cross the threshold drop your birch and walk straight through. On the other side you will see a disused well, and an old tree growing out of it, on which hangs a bird's cage. Take the cage, and take also a glass of water out of the well, and return the same way you came. Pick the birch up again, and when you pass the dog, whip him, and be careful to give him a slash in the face."

The girl carried out the old woman's instructions to the letter, and on her way back found her two long-lost brothers, who had been all over the world looking for each other. All three went back together, and on meeting the dog they struck him in the face, and he changed into a beautiful prince. The prince then came with them, and they found the old woman still fishing and waiting for them. She seemed delighted to see them all again, ferried them across the water, and then left them, for her spell was broken.

The old fisherman was charmed to have his foster children home once more. They hung the birdcage on the wall, and settled down happily. One day the second boy, who was fond of sport, went out into the forest with his gun. Being tired, he sat down to rest, and began playing his flute. On the very same day the king happened to call his hunters and started to hunt. He heard the flute, and sent a messenger to ask the flute-player who had given him leave to shoot in his forests.

"No one," said the boy.

"Who are you?"

"I am the old fisherman's son."

"But he has no children."

"Well, if you don't believe me, let us go and find him."

So they went. The fisherman was asked by the king to

tell all he knew, but before he could answer the bird in the cage began to sing—

"The poor mother it befel
To be locked in a prisoner's cell.
Oh, thou king of noble blood,
Into the river's flood
The sisters in jealous mood
Did throw your children good.
The old fisherman so kind,
These children there did find."

The whole party were very astonished when they heard this. The king then took the cage from the wall, and asked the fisherman and three children to come to the castle with him, and he at once ordered the queen to be let out of prison. The queen was ill and looked intensely melancholy, but her daughter gave her the glass of water she had taken from the old well to drink, and the queen rapidly recovered. The two naughty sisters were condemned to be roasted alive. The daughter married the prince, and so sorrow was changed into joy.

THE WATER OF LIFE

THERE was once a king who was ill, and no one thought he could get well again. He had three sons, who mourned greatly and walked up and down the castle garden weeping. Here they met one day an old man, who asked the cause of their grief. They told him their father was so ill that his life was despaired of. The old man said, "I know of a remedy. It is called the water of life. If your father drinks of it he must recover, but it is hard to get."

The eldest said, "I will find it," and went straight to the king and asked for leave to go away in order to find the water of life, which alone could heal him.

"No," said the king, "I will not let you go. The risk is too great. I would far rather die."

He implored so persistently that at last the king gave in. The prince thought in his secret heart, "If I get the water I shall be my father's favourite and he will let me inherit the kingdom."

So he set out, and after riding some distance he saw a dwarf at the roadside, who called out to him, "Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"Stupid jackanapes," said the prince haughtily, "that's no business of yours," and he rode on.

The little man, however, was furious, and he wished him ill-luck. Soon afterwards the prince strayed into a mountain ravine, and the further he rode the narrower became the path, till at last the mountains met and he couldn't progress a step further. Neither could he turn his horse's head nor stir from the saddle. He sat as if walled up.

The sick king waited anxiously for his return, but he did not come.

Then the second son said, "Father, let me go and look for the water of life," thinking to himself, "If my brother is dead the kingdom will fall to my share."

At first the king wouldn't hear of his going, but at last gave in. The prince followed the same road as his brother and also met the dwarf, who asked him the same question.

"Little whipper-snapper," replied the prince, "what business is that of yours?" and he rode on without looking round.

The dwarf cursed him and wished him evil, so that he too was stuck fast in a ravine and could neither move backwards nor forwards. Such is the fate of the haughty-spirited.

As the second son did not come back the youngest begged to be allowed to go, and the king could not at last refuse.

When he met the dwarf, who asked him where he was going in such haste, he reined in his horse and said, "I am going in search of the water of life for my father, who is very ill."

"Do you know where to find it?" asked the dwarf.

"No," said the prince.

"Because you have behaved yourself in a seemly manner and not been insolent like your haughty brothers I will give you information as to where the water of life is situated," said the dwarf. "It bubbles out of a fountain in the court-yard of a bewitched castle; but you won't be able to get in unless I provide you with an iron crowbar and two loaves of bread. With the crowbar strike three times on the iron

door, and it will spring open. Inside lie two lions on the watch, but give them each a loaf of bread and they will be quiet. Hasten in and fetch the water of life before it strikes twelve, otherwise the door will slam and you will be imprisoned."

The prince thanked him warmly, took the crowbar and the bread and started on his road.

When he arrived at his destination he found everything as the dwarf had described. The door sprang open after three blows from his crowbar, and when he had pacified the lions with bread he walked into a large hall in which sat spellbound princes ; he took the rings off their fingers and a sword and loaf lying there he also took away.

Then he went on into a room, where he saw a lovely maiden, who greeted him with kisses, declaring he was her deliverer, and that if he came back in a year she would marry him and he should share her throne. She then told where the fountain was, and bade him hurry so as to get the water before twelve struck.

So he went on and came at last to a chamber in which a white soft bed was made up, and it looked so tempting that he thought he would rest himself on it a little before going on. So he lay down and fell asleep, and when he awoke he heard a quarter to twelve strike. He jumped up in a great fright, rushed to the fountain, scooped up water with a basin that stood there, and hurried off. The moment he reached the iron door the clocks struck twelve and the door slammed just as he got through with great violence, taking away a piece of his heel. He was too delighted at having secured the water of life to mind.

On his way home he passed the dwarf again, who said when he saw the sword and bread, "You did well to take them. With the sword you'll be able to slay whole armies, and the bread will never be exhausted."

The prince was now anxious not to go home to his father without his brothers. "Beloved dwarf," he said, "can't you tell me where my two brothers are ? They went in search of the water of life before I did, and have not come back."

"They are stuck fast between two mountains," said the

dwarf. "I put a spell upon them there, because they were proud and insulted me."

The prince begged the dwarf so hard to set them free that he did so, but warned him to be careful, for his brothers had evil dispositions. When his brothers joined him he was very pleased to see them, and he told them the story of his finding the water of life — how he had procured a basinful of it, and released a charming princess, who had promised to marry him in a year's time. Afterwards they rode away together through a country suffering from the scourge of war and famine. The king of this country was in despair, as there seemed no end to the distress.

On hearing this the prince went to him and gave him of his inexhaustible supply of bread till the whole kingdom had enough to eat and was satisfied. Then the prince went to him again and lent him his sword, with which he slew the army of his enemy and was able to live in peace ever after. The prince, when this was done, took back his bread and sword, and the three brothers rode on. They came into two more countries where strife and hunger reigned, and the prince, by lending his sword and supplying bread, saved both from ruin and starvation.

After that they went on board a ship and took passage across the ocean. During the voyage the two elder brothers consulted together. "Our youngest brother," they said, "has found the water of life, and our father the king will disinherit us and give him the throne. This will be destruction for us." And they grew cruel with the lust for revenge and settled to ruin him. They waited one night till he had fallen asleep and then took the water of life out of the basin and filled it with salt sea-water.

Directly they reached home the youngest son went to his father with the basin and asked him to drink out of it health and strength. But he had scarcely tasted the bitter, brackish stuff before he became sicker than ever. And as he was complaining of this the two others came in and declared their brother wanted to poison him, and they held out to the king the genuine water of life, of which he drank and was restored immediately to health, his disease vanishing and his youthful strength returning.

Then the two elder brothers jeered at the youngest,

saying, "It's true you found the water of life, but you had all the trouble and dirty work while we have reaped the reward. It would have been wiser if you had kept your eyes open and then we should not have possessed ourselves so easily of the water of life. Now we intend to return in a year and fetch the beautiful princess for one of us to marry. It's no use your saying a word to the king; he would not believe you, and only on condition that you keep silent will we spare your life."

The old king was exceedingly angry with his youngest son, and imagined he had had designs on his life. He therefore summoned his courtiers, and pronounced the sentence that he was to be secretly shot. So one day when the prince rode out to the hunt, not suspecting anything, the king's huntsman accompanied him. When they were far away in the forest the huntsman looked thoughtful and sad, and the prince asked him the reason.

"I can't tell you," replied the huntsman. "I must not."

Then the prince said, "Say out what is on your mind and I will forgive you."

"Well, then," was the answer, "I must shoot you dead, because the king has commanded it."

The prince grew pale and said, "Look here, dear huntsman, change clothes with me. Let me take your poor ones and you put on my royal raiment."

The huntsman willingly agreed, saying he would not have had the heart to shoot him. They changed clothes, and the huntsman returned home while the prince went further into the wood.

After a time the old king received a present of three cartloads of gold and precious stones for his youngest son. They came from the monarchs whose kingdoms the prince had rescued from starvation with the bread and from the enemy with his sword, and were tokens of gratitude. The old king then began to wonder whether after all his son had been innocent. He said to his people, "I wish he were alive. I repent bitterly that I had him put to death."

"He still lives," said the huntsman. "I had not the heart to carry out your commands," and he told the king what had happened.

A great load fell from the king's heart and he advertised in every country for his son, begging him to come home.

The princess meanwhile had had a path made of gold leading to her castle, and told her attendants that he who rode up it would be the chosen one, but he who rode on either side of it would be rejected.

The eldest son, when the year drew to a close, thought it was now time to ride off and claim the princess and become her consort. But on approaching the castle and seeing the path of gold glittering in the sun he thought, "It would be a pity to damage that by riding on it," and he kept to one side.

So when he arrived at the entrance the servants told him he was not the right suitor and he must go away. Soon after the second son set out on the same errand, and he, too, thought it would be a sad pity to let his horse's hoofs tread down the golden pathway and rode to the left of it. At the entrance he was greeted with the news that he was not the chosen bridegroom.

Now when the year was quite up the youngest son rode out to claim his lady love, and as he came near the castle he was so engrossed in thinking of her that he never noticed the golden path and trotted up the very middle of it. He was received with joy by the princess, and their marriage was celebrated afterwards. He rode back to his father and told him how his brothers had cheated him; but before the king could punish them they sailed away over the ocean and never came back again.

THE DEVIL'S RUSTY BROTHER

A DISCHARGED soldier had nothing to live on, and didn't know how to get work. He went into the wood one day, and met a little man who was the devil.

The little man said, "How sad you look! What's the matter?"

The soldier said, "I am hungry and haven't a farthing."

The little man then said, "Will you hire yourself out to me to be my valet? If so, you will be provided for to the end of your days. Seven years I shall expect you to serve

me, but afterwards you will be free. But there is one thing you must know beforehand: while you are in my service you must never wash, comb your hair, or cut your nails, or wipe your eyes."

The soldier replied, "If it must be so, I promise I will serve you."

The little man at once led him into hell. He was then told his duties. He had to stoke the fires under the kettles in which the infernal broth was cooking, keep the house clean, and polish the door handles; but if he once peeped inside the kettles it would be the worse for him.

The soldier vowed he would attend to all these things. So the old man left him in charge and resumed his wanderings. The soldier laid and lit the fires, and polished the door handles. The old man came to see how he was getting on, and being satisfied, went away a second time. The soldier then looked round him, and when he saw all the kettles simmering on the mighty furnace he would have given anything to peep in the lids and see what was in them, but remembered how strictly he had been forbidden. At last, however, he could no longer contain himself for curiosity, and did lift the lid of the first kettle. He saw inside one of his former junior officers. "Ha, ha! my bird!" he exclaimed. "Do I meet you here? Once you ordered me about, now I am set over you," so he let the lid fall again and stoked up the fire. Then he went to the next kettle, peeped in, and saw a standard bearer there. "Ha, ha! my bird! do I meet you here? You were over me once, now our positions are reversed." He shut the lid and threw more fuel on the flames. In the third kettle he found a general. "Ha, ha! my bird!" he exclaimed, "who would have thought of meeting you here? I belonged to you once, now you are mine," and he fetched the bellows and made the furnace roar. So thus for seven years he performed his office, and did not cut his nails the whole time, do his hair, or wash; and the time went so quickly that it seemed only like six months.

When the time was up the devil came and asked, "Hans, how have you been behaving? What have you been doing?"

"I have made up the fires," he answered, "polished the door-handles, and kept everything in order."

"You have peeped in the kettles," said his master. "Well for you that you put no wood on the fires, or it would have been all over with you. Now your time is up, would you like to go home?"

"Yes," replied the soldier. "I would like to see my father again."

"Well, then," said his employer, "go and fill your knapsack with coke for wages and take it home. But you must go unwashed, unkempt, and unshaved, with uncut nails and bleary eyes, and when you are asked where you come from, you must say 'from hell,' and when you are asked who you are, you must say 'The devil's rusty brother and a king to boot!'"

The soldier was silent while the devil talked to him, but was by no means satisfied with his wages. But as soon as he was up in the forest he took his knapsack off his back to shake it out, and found the coke had become pure gold. "That is unexpected," he exclaimed, and walked on in high delight to the town. He came to the door of an inn, but the landlord, who was outside, was horrified at his appearance, for Hans looked so terrible, worse than any scarecrow.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From hell," was the answer.

"Who are you?"

"The devil's rusty brother and a king to boot."

At first the landlord refused to admit him, but when he displayed his gold he himself led the way into the inn. He gave Hans the best room and attendance, and Hans eat and drank to his heart's content, but neither washed nor shaved nor cut his nails as he had been commanded by the devil, and then he lay down to sleep. The landlord could not get the knapsack full of gold out of his thoughts, and had no peace till he stealthily crept into the room in the night and stole it.

Hans got up the next morning and was going to pay the landlord and pursue his road when he found his knapsack gone. He at once collected himself and thought, "You have met with a misfortune through no fault of your own,"

turned round and went back to hell. He told the old man his trouble, and begged for help.

The devil said, "Sit down, I'll shave and wash you and comb your hair and cut your nails and wipe your eyes," and when he had done this, he gave him another knapsack full of coke. "Go," he said, "and tell your landlord to give you back your gold, or I'll come and fetch him and he shall stoke the fires instead of you."

Hans went and spoke to the landlord, telling him that if he did not restore the stolen property, he would have to go to hell and come out looking as horrible as he had done the first time. The landlord gave him the gold at once, and more still, and told him to say nothing about it. So Hans became a rich man.

He made tracks home to his father, but on the way bought himself an old smock, which he put on and went about playing music which he had been taught in hell. There was an aged king in one country he came through, and he sent for Hans to play to him. His delight with the strange music knew no bounds, and he promised Hans his eldest daughter's hand in marriage. She, however, declared she would rather be drowned than marry a vulgar fellow in a white smock. So the king's youngest daughter, who loved her father so much she would do anything to please him, took the devil's rusty brother for her husband, and when the old king died he was ruler of the whole kingdom.

THE MAN WITH THE BEARSKIN

THERE was a young man who had entered the army; he behaved himself bravely, and was always the first to face the bullets. All went well so long as the war lasted, but when peace was made he received his discharge, and his captain told him to go about his business. His parents were dead, and he had no home of his own; so he asked his brothers to take him in till the war should begin. But they had hard hearts, and answered that they could do nothing for him, that he was fit for nothing, and must shift for himself as he best could. The poor fellow had

nothing in the world but his gun, so he shouldered it and went out to do as best he could.

He came into a great open region, where nothing was to be seen but a circle of trees. There he sat down in the shade, and thought gloomily of his fate. "I have no money; I have never learnt any trade but that of war, and now that peace is made I am not fit for anything. I see that I shall have to die of hunger."

Just then he heard a noise, and lifting his eyes saw before him a stranger, dressed all in green, handsomely attired enough, but with a frightful horse's hoof.

"I know what you want," said the stranger; "it's money. You shall have as much as you can carry; but first I want to convince myself that you're not afraid, for I give nothing to cowards."

"Soldier and coward," said the other, "are two words that do not go together. You may put me to the proof."

"Well, then," replied the stranger, "look behind you."

The soldier turning round, saw a huge bear coming towards him and growling.

"Oh, oh!" said he, "I'll tickle your nose for you, and cure you of growling." And he levelled his musket and shot the bear dead on the spot.

"I see," said the stranger, "that you don't want for courage; but there are other conditions you will have to fulfil."

"Nothing shall stop me," said the soldier, who saw that he had to do with an evil spirit, "so long as my soul is not imperilled."

"You shall judge for yourself," replied the man. "For seven years you are not to wash yourself, nor to comb your beard or hair, nor to cut your nails. I will give you a coat and a cloak which you must wear during the whole time. If you die in the interval, you'll belong to me; if you live longer than seven years, you shall be free and rich all your life."

The soldier thought of the poverty to which he was reduced, and as he had so often defied death, he resolved to face it once more, and accepted the proposal.

The man in green took off his own coat and gave it to the soldier, saying, "So long as you wear this coat,

whenever you put your hand in your pocket, you will bring it out full of gold." Then, having stripped the bear of its skin, he added, "This will serve you for a cloak, and also for a bed, for you may not have any other; and by reason of this clothing you will be called 'Bearskin.'" Hereupon the apparition vanished.

The soldier put on the coat, and putting his hand in his pocket found that his visitor had not deceived him. He at once put the bearskin on his back and began to roam through the world, making holiday, and denying himself none of those good things which make people fat and their purses lean. For the first year his appearance was passable enough, but in the second he already looked frightful. His hair almost completely hid his face, his beard was matted like a piece of felt, and his face so entirely covered with dirt, that if grass seed had been sown in it the seed would have come up. He made every one flee away in terror; but as he gave to all the poor, begging them in return to pray that he might not die within the seven years, and as he appeared an honest man he always found a resting-place.

In the fourth year he once came to an inn, where the host refused to receive him even in the stable for fear he should frighten the horses. But Bearskin drew from his pocket a handful of ducats, and the host was mollified at sight of them, and gave him a room in the backyard on condition that he should not let himself be seen, so that the reputation of the establishment might not be destroyed.

One evening Bearskin was sitting in his room, wishing with all his heart that the seven years were over, when he heard some one weeping in the next chamber. Being a good-natured fellow he opened the door and saw an old man, who was sobbing, with his head resting on his hands. When he saw Bearskin come in, the man was frightened and wanted to run away. But at last he grew calmer when he heard himself addressed by a human voice, and Bearskin succeeded at last, by means of friendly words, in inducing him to tell the cause of his sorrow. He had lost all his fortune, and was reduced, with his daughters, to such poverty that he could not pay the host and was going to be sent to prison.

"If that's the only cause of your grief," quoth Bearskin, "I've money enough to get you out of the scrape." And he summoned the host, paid him his demand, and gave the poor debtor a large sum into the bargain for his necessities.

The old man, thus relieved from his woes, did not know how sufficiently to testify his gratitude. "Come with me," said he, "my daughters are marvels of beauty, you shall choose one of them for your wife. She will not refuse when she hears what you have just done for me. In truth you have rather a comical appearance, but a wife will soon alter that."

Bearskin agreed to accompany the old man; but when the eldest daughter caught sight of the horrible countenance, she was so frightened that she fled away with loud outcries. The second stood her ground and looked at her suitor from head to foot, but then she said, "How am I to accept a husband who has not a human face? I'd rather have the shaven bear I saw one day at the fair, dressed up like a man, with a hussar's pelisse and white gloves. At any rate he was only ugly, and one might in time get used to that."

But the youngest daughter said, "Dear father, he must be a good man because he helped us; you have promised him a wife, and you must keep your word."

Unfortunately, Bearskin's face was covered with hair and dirt or it would have shown the flush of joy which overspread it and swelled his heart when he heard these words. He took a ring from his finger, broke it in two, and gave one half to his betrothed, begging her to keep it carefully while he kept the other half. On the piece he gave her he wrote his own name, and inscribed the young girl's on the piece he kept for himself. Then he took leave of her, saying, "I must quit you for three years. If I come back we will be married, but if I do not come you will know that I am dead, and you will be free. Pray that my life may be spared."

The poor betrothed maiden was sorry, and the tears came into her eyes when she thought of her intended. Her sisters overwhelmed her with unkind jests.

"Take care," said the eldest, "or, when you give him your hand, he'll scratch you with his paw"

"Have a care," said the second, "bears are fond of delicacies. If he takes a fancy to you, he will eat you up."

"You'll always have to do as he pleases," resumed the eldest, "or else he'll be growling."

"But," struck in the second, "the wedding ball will be pleasant, bears can dance gaily."

The poor girl let her sisters have their say without growing angry.

As for the man with the bearskin, he was always wandering through the world, doing good whenever he could, and giving generously to the poor so that they might pray for him.

At last, when the last day of the seven years had come, he returned to the plain and entered the circle of trees. A great wind sprang up, and the demon soon appeared with an angry face ; he threw the soldier his old clothes, and asked to have his own green coat back again.

"Wait a minute," said Bearskin, "you must first clean me."

The evil spirit was obliged, very much against his wish, to bring some water, to wash Bearskin, comb his hair, and cut his nails. The man now resumed the appearance of a brave soldier, and looked much handsomer than he had ever seemed before.

Bearskin felt a great weight taken off his heart when the evil spirit departed without further tormenting him. He returned to the town, put on a magnificent velvet coat, and, stepping into a carriage drawn by four white horses, drove to the house of his intended. No one recognised him. The father took him for an officer of high rank, and made him go into the room where his daughters were seated. The two eldest made him sit down between them. They put before him a delicious repast, and declared they had never seen so handsome a cavalier. As to his betrothed, she sat opposite to him in her black dress, with her eyes cast down, and said not a word. At length the father asked him if he would marry one of his daughters. Then the two elder girls ran into their room to adorn themselves, for each thought she would be the one chosen.

The stranger, thus left alone with his betrothed, took from his pocket his half of the ring, and threw it into a glass of wine which he offered to her. When she had drunk, and saw this fragment at the bottom of the glass, her heart beat quick. She seized the other half, which hung from her neck, applied it to the first, and the two pieces fitted exactly. Then he said to her, "I am your beloved bridegroom, whom you saw under a bear's skin; now, by heaven's mercy, I have recovered my human shape and am purified from my stains." Then he took her in his arms and kissed her over and over again. At this moment the two sisters came back in grand costume; but when they found that the handsome young man was for their sister, and that he was the bearskin man, they ran off full of anger and spite: the first went and drowned herself in a well, and the second hanged herself on a tree.

That evening there was a knock at the door, and, the bridegroom going to open it, found the green-coated apparition with the cloven foot standing outside. And the green coat said, "Well, you've escaped me, but I've got two to-day instead of you."

THE WREN AND THE BEAR

One day the bear and the wolf were walking together in the wood, when the bear heard a bird singing, and said, "Brother wolf, what bird is that which sings so sweetly?"

"That is a king among birds," said the wolf; "we must bow before him." It was, in fact, the wren.

"If that is the case," said the bear, "I should like to see his royal palace. Come and take me there."

"That's not so easily done as you imagine," replied the wolf; "you must wait till the queen comes."

Soon after, the queen arrived; and both she and the king had food in their mouths, and were going to feed their young ones. The bear was for following them at once; but the wolf said, "No; you must wait till their majesties, the king and queen, are gone again." So they

took notice of the hole in which the nest was built, and trotted off.

But the bear could not rest until he had seen the royal palace ; and after a little while he went forward again to look. Sure enough, the king and the queen had gone out ; and, peering in, he saw five or six little ones lying in the nest. "Is that the palace ?" he asked ; "that's a miserable place, and you're not king's children at all, you miserable little creatures."

When all the little wrens heard him talk thus, they were very angry, and cried, "We are not what you say. Our parents are honourable people, and you shall pay for insulting us, you bear." The bear and the wolf were frightened when they heard that, and ran away and went to their dens.

But the little wrens all continued their shouting and clamour, and when their parents brought their food, they said, "We will not touch so much as a fly's leg till you have settled whether we are noble children or not ! the bear has been here abusing us."

"Be quiet," answered the old king ; "that shall be settled ;" and he flew with her majesty the queen before the bear's den, and called in, "Old Bruin ! why did you abuse my children ? It shall be the worse for you, for there shall be a bloody war about it."

So war was declared against the bear, and all the four-footed animals were called—ox and cow, ass, stag, and doe, and all that ran on the earth ; and the wren, on his part, summoned all that flew through the air—not only the birds, great and small, but even the gnats, hornets, bees, and flies, were obliged to come.

When the time had come for the war to begin, the wren sent out spies to learn who was the commanding general of the hostile party. The gnat was the most cunning of his followers. She flew through the woods where the forces of the enemy were assembling, and at length sat down under a leaf on the tree beneath which the council was being held. The bear stood up and called the fox before him, and said, "Fox, you are the most cunning of all the animals ; you shall be general, and lead us on."

"With all my heart!" answered the fox, "but what shall be our signal?" The beasts could not tell; so he continued, "I have a fine long bushy tail, which looks almost like a red plume; when I keep it cocked up in the air, it's a sign that things are going well, and you must march forward briskly; but when I let it hang down, then you may run as hard as you can."

When the gnat had heard this, she flew home again, and told the wren about it, word for word.

When the day broke, on the morning when the battle was to be fought, the four-footed beasts came running on with such a noise that the earth trembled; and the wren with his army came flying through the air, whirring, screaming, and swarming in most dizzying fashion; and the two sides began to attack one another. But the wren sent the hornet forward, with orders to attack the fox in the rear, and sting him with all her might. When the fox felt the first sting, he started, and kicked out his hind leg; but he bore the sting, and still kept his tail in the air. At the second attack he was obliged to lower his ensign for a moment; and at the third, he could hold out no longer, but gave a shriek and stuck his tail between his legs. When the beasts saw that, they imagined all was lost, and began to run, each one to his own den; and thus the birds won the battle.

Then their majesties, the king and queen, flew home to their children, and cried, "Children, be merry, eat and drink to your hearts' content; we have won the battle!"

But all the young wrens exclaimed, "We will not eat and drink until the bear comes to the nest and begs our pardon, and says that we are honourable children."

So the old wren flew to the bear's den, and cried, "Bruin, you're to go to the nest, to my children, and beg their pardon, and declare that they are noble children; or else all the ribs in your body shall be crushed."

And the bear crept to the nest in a great fright and begged pardon. And then at last the young wrens were satisfied, and ate and drank, and kept up a merry feast till late in the night.

THE SWEET SOUP

THERE was once a little girl, poor but good; she lived alone with her mother, and a time came when they had nothing to eat. But the child went into the forest, and there she saw an old woman, who gave her a pot, which had the gift, that when any one said to it, "Boil, little pot," it boiled sweet soup; and at the words, "Stop, little pot," it would cease boiling. The little girl took home the pot to her mother, and there was an end of their poverty and want, for they could have sweet soup whenever they liked. But one day the little maid went out, and while she was away her mother said, "Boil, little pot." So it began to simmer, and she soon ate as much as she wanted; but when she wished the pot to stop she could not remember the word. So the pot boiled away, and soon the soup came bubbling over the edge; and as it kept boiling on the kitchen was soon full, and it filled the house, and the next house, and the whole street. And there seemed soup enough to feed all the world, for though it was high time the pot was stopped, nobody knew how to do it. At last, when there was only one more cottage in the village not full of soup, the child came home and said, "Stop, little pot!" and it left off boiling; but, now, whoever wants to visit that village must eat his way through the soup.

THE CLEVER PEOPLE

ONE day a peasant took his ash walking-stick out of the corner and said to his wife, "Trude, I am going across country. I shan't be home for three days. If the cattle-dealer calls while I am away to buy our three cows you can close with him on the condition that he gives you not less than two hundred thalers for them. Remember, not less."

"Go along with you," answered his wife, "I will see to it."

"So you say," said the peasant, "but when you were a baby some one let you fall on your head, and there are still traces in you of that accident. But I give you fair

warning. If you make a fool of yourself I'll strike you across the back with this stick till you are black and blue and you'll feel it for a year at least. Mark my word."

The next day the cattle-dealer arrived, and without much ceremony the matter was settled. On seeing the cows and hearing the price he agreed to take them at once.

The cows were taken off the chain and driven out of the cowshed. Just, however, as they reached the door the woman caught him by the sleeve and said, "You must pay the two hundred thalers first or I can't let you take the cows."

"All right," answered the man, "I have merely forgotten to bring my money-bags. But you may trust me. I will take the two cows and leave the third behind as surety."

The woman thought his proposal all square and allowed him to go with the two cows. "How pleased Hans will be," she thought, "at my managing so well!"

The man came back in three days as he had said he would, and at once inquired if the cows had been purchased.

"Of course, dear Hans," answered his wife, "and for the sum you named, two hundred thalers. They aren't worth all that, but the dealer took them without any demur."

"Where is the money?" asked the peasant.

"Oh, I haven't got the money," answered the woman; "he had forgotten his money-bag, but said he would bring it soon, and left a surety behind."

"What surety?" inquired the man.

"One of the three cows, which he will not get till he has paid for the others. I was very sharp, for I kept back the smallest because it eats least."

The man flew into a furious rage, swung his stick in the air, and was going to bring it down on her shoulders, when suddenly he stayed his hand, "You are the stupidest goose on God's earth," he exclaimed. "But I pity you. I will go out on the high road and wait there for three days and see if I come across a bigger fool than yourself. If I do you shall escape your beating; if not you'll have your well-earned reward."

He went out and seated himself on a stone by the high road. He soon saw a long waggon coming with a woman standing up in the middle of it instead of sitting on the bundle of straw to drive or holding the heads of the oxen. The man thought, "This is the kind of thing you are looking for." He got up and ran in front of the waggon like a man out of his mind.

"What do you want, gaffer?" said the woman. "I don't know you. Where do you come from?"

"I have fallen from heaven," was the answer, "and don't know how I am to get back. Could you drive me there?"

"No," said the woman, "I don't know the way. But if you come from heaven you can tell me news of my husband. He has been there for three years. You, of course, have met him."

"Yes, I have seen him," said the man, "but even in heaven every one isn't prosperous. He keeps the sheep, and they give him a good deal of trouble, because they are always going astray in the wilderness and he has to run after them. He is ragged and tattered, and his clothes will soon fall off his body. There are no tailors in heaven. St. Peter, as you know from the legend, won't let them in."

"Who would have thought it?" cried the woman. "I tell you what I'll do: I'll run home and fetch his Sunday coat, which is still hanging in the wardrobe, if you'll be so kind as to take it to him."

"That won't do," said the peasant. "No clothes can be taken into heaven. They all have to be left at the gate."

"Listen to me," said the woman. "Yesterday I sold my oats, and a pretty little sum of money I got for them. I will send it to him. Stick the purse in your pocket, no one will see it."

"If you are set on it," said the peasant, "I will do you the favour with pleasure."

"Then wait there a minute and I will run home and fetch the purse. I'll be back directly."

She drove on her oxen, and the peasant thought, "She has certainly a talent for imbecility. Should she really bring me the purse my wife will be let off her beating!"

Not many minutes passed and the woman returned and stuffed the money into his pocket herself, and before she left him she thanked him profusely for being so obliging.

When the woman came home she found her son just come in from his work in the fields. She related the wonderful events of the morning and added, "I am so delighted that the opportunity has occurred to send my husband help. Who would have thought that he would have suffered want in heaven?"

The son was greatly astonished. "Mother," he said, "people don't fall from heaven every day. I will start off at once and see if I can overtake the man. I should like to hear a few more particulars." He saddled his horse and rode away at a great pace. He found the peasant under a tree counting the money.

"Have you seen the fellow," he inquired, "who has dropped from heaven?"

"Yes," answered the peasant, "he has already started on his way back and has ascended yonder mountain. You might pick him up if you rode fast."

"Oh, I have been mowing all day," said the youth, "and I am tired with my ride here. Perhaps as you know the man you would be so good as to take my horse and persuade him to come back."

"Ha, ha," exclaimed the peasant inwardly, "here's another who has no wick in his lamp."

"There is no reason why I shouldn't do you the favour," he said aloud, mounted the horse and rode off at post haste.

The youth remained under the tree till night fell, but the peasant did not come back. "Of course," he thought, "the man from heaven was in a great hurry, and perhaps the peasant gave him the horse to take to my father." He then went home and told his mother he had sent his father the horse in order that he should not have to wander so far on foot after the sheep.

"You did quite right," she answered. "You with your young legs can do without a horse."

When the peasant came home he put the horse up in the stable near the cow, went to his wife and said, "Trude,

congratulate yourself. I have met two persons who are bigger fools than you are, so this time I'll keep my thrashing for another occasion." He lit his pipe, sat down in the grandfather's arm-chair and meditated. "A good stroke of business, that! A well-groomed horse and a large bag of gold in exchange for two lean cows. If stupidity always brought in such a good harvest one would hold it in high esteem." This was the peasant's opinion, but we, of course, would not agree with him.

TALES OF THE TOAD

I.

Once upon a time there was a small child whose mother gave her a little bowl of milk every afternoon, and the child sat out in the yard with it. Now, when she began to eat, the tame toad crept out of a crevice in the wall, bent his head into the milk, and ate with her. The child enjoyed this, and when she sat out with her little bowl and the toad did not appear at once, she cried to him—

"Toad, toad, come to me quick,
Come along, my little pet,
Your crumb of bread for you is set,
Come and be refreshed with milk."

Then the toad came running up to her and was pleased with the food. He showed his gratitude, moreover, by bringing the child all kinds of beautiful things from his secret store—brilliant stones, pearls, and golden toys. But the toad drank only the milk, and left the bread crumbs. One day the child took her little spoon, tapped him lightly on the head with it, and said, "Little thing, eat the bread too."

The mother, standing in the kitchen, heard the child talking with some one, and when she saw the child strike a toad with her spoon, she ran out with a wooden stick and killed the good creature.

From that time forth a change came over the child.

So long as the toad had eaten with her, she had grown big and strong; but now she lost her pretty red cheeks and pined away. Not long after the death-bird began to scream in the night and the redbreast collected twigs and leaves, and soon the child was laid on the bier.

II.

An orphan child was sitting by the town wall spinning, when she saw a toad come out of an opening under the wall. She quickly spread out her blue silk neckerchief, which all toads are very fond of, and which attracts them. As soon as the toad saw it, he turned round and came back, carrying a little gold crown, laid it on the kerchief, and then went away again. The girl took up the crown, and it glistened and was of fine golden web. Soon after the toad came again a second time, but as he could not see anything of the crown, he crept back to the wall and struck his head against it as long as he had the strength to do so, till at last he lay there dead. If the girl had only left the crown where it was, the toad would doubtless have brought her more treasures from his hole.

III.

The toad cries, "Croak, croak."

The child says, "Come out."

The toad comes forward. The child then asks after its little sister. "Have you not seen little Redstocking?"

The toad says, "Nay, not I; how about you? Croak, croak, croak."

THE POOR MILLER'S LAD AND THE KITTEN

In a mill there lived an old miller who had neither wife nor children, and three apprentices served under him. When they had been some years with him he said to them, "I am old and like to sit behind the stove; go

forth, and whichever of you brings me home the best horse, to him I will give the mill, and in return he must take care of me till I die." It happened that the third of the apprentices was the factotum and held for a fool by the others, who grudged him the mill; he did not want it himself afterwards.

Thereupon they all three went out together, and as they drew near to the village, the two others said to foolish Hans, "You can just stop here. You will never win a horse all your days." But Hans went with them, and when it was night they came to a hollow, in which they laid themselves down to sleep. The two clever ones waited till Hans was fast asleep, then they got up and went off, leaving Hans lying in the hollow, and thinking they had made a very good job of it. Yes, indeed, but it would not do them any good!

When the sun rose and awoke Hans, he was lying in a deep hole. He looked all round and cried, "Ah me, where am I?" He then stood up and scrambled out of the hole, went into the wood, and thought to himself, "Here am I all alone and forsaken. How can I get a horse?"

As he went along thinking thus, he was met by a little tabby kitten, that said in a very friendly way, "Hans, where do you want to go?"

"Alas, you cannot help me."

"I know well what you require," said the kitten; "you would like to have a pretty nag. Come with me and be my faithful servant for seven years, and I will give you a more beautiful one than you have ever seen in your life."

"Well, this is a wonderful cat," thought Hans. "Anyway, I can try if what she says is true."

Then she led him to her magic castle, where she had several cats to serve her. They sprang nimbly up and down the stairs, and were good and merry creatures. In the evening, when they had their meal, two of them had to supply music; one played the bass, the other blew the trumpet, and blew out its cheeks, too, as much as it could. When they had finished eating the table was carried away, and the cat said, "Come now, Hans, and dance with me."

"No," answered he, "I do not dance with a pussy-cat; I have never yet done that."

"Then take him to bed," said she to the cats. Then one lighted him to his bedroom, one took off his shoes, and another his stockings, and at the end one blew out the light.

The next morning they came back and helped him out of bed. One put on his stockings, one tied his garters, one fetched his shoes, one washed him, and one dried his face with its tail.

"That is very gently done," said Hans. But he had to wait on the cat as well, and cut up wood every day, for which he was given a silver axe, with silver wedges and saw, and the striker was of copper. Now he cut it up, stayed at the house, had good food and drink, but saw no one but the tabby cat and her servants.

One day she said to him, "Go out and mow my field and dry the grass," and gave him a silver scythe and a whetstone of gold, but told him to be sure and give them back again. Then Hans went off and did as he had been told.

When his work was finished he carried home the scythe, whetstone, and hay, and asked whether she would not give him his wages.

"No," said the cat, "you must still do one more thing for me. There is timber of silver, a carpenter's axe, an iron-rule, and what is necessary, all in silver, so now build me a little house with them."

Hans built the little house and said he had now done everything, but still he had no horse; yet the seven years had flown by like half the time.

The cat asked if he would like to see her horses.

"Yes," said Hans.

Then she unlocked the little house for him, and when she opened the doors, there stood twelve horses, all glossy and shining enough to be indeed proud of, so that his heart rejoiced over them.

She now gave him food and drink, saying, "Go home; I will not give you your horse yet, but in three days I will come and bring it to you."

Hans therefore went out, and she showed him the way

to the mill. She had not given him any new clothes, however, so that he was obliged to keep on his old ragged smock that he had brought with him, and that had become altogether too short for him in the seven years.

When he came home the two poor apprentices were already back. Each had indeed brought back his horse, but one of them was blind and the other's was lame. They asked him, "Hans, where is your horse?"

"It will follow me in three days."

Then they laughed and said, "Oh, indeed, Hans, where will you get a horse from? That is all very fine!"

Hans went into the sitting-room, but the miller said he must not come to the table, for he was so torn and ragged they would be ashamed if any one came in.

They gave him a little food outside, and when they went off to sleep in the evening the two others would not give him any bed, and at last he had to creep into the goose-shed and lie down on a little hard straw.

When he woke in the morning the three days had already gone by, and there came a coach with six horses, which shone so that they were good to look upon, and a footman bringing yet a seventh, which was for the poor miller's apprentice.

But now there stepped out of the coach a lovely princess, and she went into the mill; she was the little tabby kitten whom poor Hans had served for seven years. She asked the miller where the mill-boy—the lad-of-all-work—was.

Then the miller said, "We could not take him into the mill, he is so tattered, and is lying in the goose-stall."

Then the princess said they must fetch him at once. So they brought him out, and he had to gather up his little smock to cover himself. Then the footman unstrapped magnificent clothing, and was made to wash and dress him, and when he had finished no king could have looked finer. After that the maiden wished to see the horses which the other mill-hands had brought back, one blind and the other lame. Then she sent the footman to bring the seventh horse. When the miller saw it he declared one like that had never come into his yard.

"And that is for the third apprentice," said she.

"Then he must have the mill," said the miller, but the princess said there was the horse, he might keep the mill as well; and she took her faithful Hans, set him in the coach, and drove away with him. They drove first to the little silver house that he had built with the silver tools, and it had become a great castle, and all within was of silver and gold. And there she married him and he was rich—so rich that he had plenty all his days. Therefore no one should ever say that because a person is slow-witted nothing can go right with him.

THE TWO WANDERERS

Once a journeyman cobbler and a journeyman tailor met on their wanderings. The tailor was a little, good-looking chap, always lively and full of jokes. When he saw the cobbler coming, and recognised his trade from the leather cutter he carried, he burst into a mocking song—

"Thread the needle
Draw the last,
Daub it right and left with wax,
Strike, strike as hard as you can."

The cobbler couldn't stand a joke, made a grimace as if he had been drinking vinegar, and threatened to take the tailor by the scruff of his neck and shake him.

The little chap began to laugh heartily, handed him his bottle, and said, "I didn't mean any harm. Take a good swig and swallow down your anger."

The cobbler obeyed, and the thundercloud began to clear off his countenance. He handed back the bottle to the tailor and said, "It was thirst that made me touchy. Shall we wander further in company?"

"I shall be delighted," said the tailor, "if you have a mind to visit a large town where there is sure to be work to get."

"That is just what I should like to do," said the cobbler. "There is nothing going in a village, and in the country one is reduced to walking barefoot."

They therefore stepped out together. For a long time they didn't get much to eat or drink, but when they came to a town at last they went round and called on the tradesmen, and as the little tailor looked so fresh and gay, and had such pretty rosy cheeks, every one gave him something, and the daughters of the master-tailor gave him a kiss to cheer him on his road.

When he joined the cobbler again he had a great deal more in his bundle, and the cross-grained cobbler made a sour face and said something about "the greater the rogue, the greater his luck."

The tailor was not in the least offended, but laughed and divided all he had with his comrade.

Then they wandered on again and came to a huge forest, through which the road lay to a royal city. There were two paths; one took two days and the other seven, but neither knew which was the shorter.

The two wanderers sat down under an oak tree and consulted what they should do and for how many days they should supply themselves with bread. The cobbler said, "One must take thought for the morrow and look ahead. I shall take bread to last for seven days."

"What!" exclaimed the tailor, "load oneself with enough bread for seven days, like a beast of burden? I will rather trust to God to feed me. The money in my pocket keeps as well in summer as in winter, but bread dries up in the heat and gets hard. What is there to prevent us finding the right way? I shall buy bread for two days, but no more." So each brought their supply of bread and made their way into the forest.

It was all so still and quiet there, like the inside of a church. Not a breath of wind stirred, no brook gurgled or bird sang, and not a ray of sunlight penetrated the dark, thick foliage.

The cobbler didn't talk at all, for his heavy weight of bread made his back ache, and the perspiration poured from his sour, gloomy visage.

The tailor, on the other hand, was merry, skipped about, whistled on a leaf, or sang a snatch of song, and thought, "It must please God in heaven to see me so happy."

Two days passed, and on the third the forest had not come to an end, but the tailor's bread had, and his spirits sank a little ; all the same he did not lose heart, but put faith in God and his good luck. On the night of the third day he lay down to sleep hungry, and woke up the next morning hungrier still. So it went on through the fourth day.

The cobbler sat on the stump of a tree and devoured his meal, while there was nothing for the tailor to do but to look on. If he implored him to bestow on him a morsel of bread, the cobbler laughed contemptuously. "You have always been so merry and gay, now see what it feels like not to be merry," he said. "The birds who sing in the morning are often snared before evening." In short, the cobbler had no compassion.

On the fifth morning the poor tailor could hardly stand for exhaustion, and was too weak almost to speak. His cheeks were pale and his eyes red.

Then the cobbler said, "I will give you a piece of bread, but in return you must let me put out your right eye."

The unfortunate tailor, who wanted to live, saw no alternative but to consent to this arrangement. He cried once more with both eyes, and then the cobbler, who had a heart of stone, poked the right one out with a sharp knife.

The tailor remembered an old saying of his mother's which he had heard her speak in the store-room after he had eaten good things, "Eat as much as you can, and suffer afterwards." When he had finished his dearly-bought bread, he got on his legs again, forgot his trouble, and comforted himself with the thought that he could still see with one eye. But on the sixth day the pangs of hunger were worse than ever, and at night he fell down under a tree, and the next morning could not rise for exhaustion, and he saw he was face to face with death.

The cobbler then said, "I will show mercy and give you more bread, if you will let me put out your other eye."

Then the tailor saw how frivolous his life had been, prayed to God for forgiveness, and said, "Do with me what you will, but remember that our Father in heaven judges all, and that an hour will come when you will have

to expiate your evil-doing, which I have not deserved at your hands. In brighter days I shared my all with you. My trade requires eyesight. With no eyes I shall not be able to stitch and must go a-begging. I pray you, therefore, when you have blinded me, not to leave me here alone to perish."

The cobbler had no pity in his heart. He took the knife and gouged out his companion's left eye, then he gave him a slice of bread, handed him a stick, and led him after him.

When the sun went down they came out of the forest into the field, on which a gallows stood. The cobbler led the blind tailor up to it, left him there, and went his way.

The unfortunate little man, from weariness, pain, and hunger, fell asleep and slept the whole night. At dawn he awoke and didn't know where he was. Two poor sinners hung on the gallows, and on the head of each was perched a carrion-crow. Then one of them began to speak.

"Brother, are you awake?" he asked.

"Yes, I am awake," answered the second.

"Then I will tell you something," the first spoke again. "The dew which this night has fallen on the gallows restores the sight if the eyes are washed with it. How many blind people, if they knew it, would get back their sight!"

Directly the tailor heard this he took his handkerchief, rubbed it in the grass, and when it was soaked with dew, washed his empty sockets. And what the man on the gallows had said came true, for a pair of new, strong eyeballs grew at once in his sockets. The tailor saw the sun rise behind the mountains; before him in the valley lay the great royal city, with its towers and spires and gorgeous cupolas, its golden fanes flashing in the morning sunlight. He could distinguish every leaf on the trees, and saw all the birds that flew past and the gnats that danced in the air. He whipped a needle out of his pocket, and as he could thread it as easily as ever, his heart bounded with joy. He threw himself on his knees and thanked God for His mercies, and he did not forget to remember in his prayers the poor creatures hanging on the gallows.

Then he put his bundle on his back, forgot his late sufferings and misery, and went onwards, whistling and singing.

The first thing he met was a brown foal frisking about in the fields. He caught it by the mane and would have jumped on its back and rode to the town, but the foal begged to be allowed its freedom. "I am too young," it said, "and even a light tailor like you might break my back. Let me go, and one day I may be able to reward you."

"Run off, then," said the tailor, "I see you are a Spring-hill-Jack." He gave it a slash of the whip, and in its joy it threw up its hind legs and plunged over hedges and ditches away into the next field.

The little tailor had eaten nothing since the day before. "The sun," he said, "fills my eyes, but there's no bread in my mouth. The first thing I meet that is at all eatable I must kill." And then he saw a stork coming towards him over the meadow. "Stop!" he cried, and seized it by the leg. "I don't know whether you are good to eat, but my hunger gives me no choice. I must kill and roast you!"

"Don't do it, please," besought the stork. "I am a sacred bird and I never have done any mischief, but, on the contrary, I am of great benefit to man. Give me my life and I will repay you one day."

"Run along, then, cousin longshanks," said the tailor, and the stork rose, letting its long legs hang down, and flew away.

"What is to be done?" said the tailor to himself. "My hunger becomes greater and my stomach emptier, and every opportunity that comes in my way I let slide." Just at that moment he saw some ducks swimming on a pond. "They have appeared as if by magic," he thought, and caught one. But just as he was going to wring its neck the old duck in the reeds set up a piteous shriek, waddled hastily forward with parted beak, and implored him to spare the life of her child—

"Think," she said, "of how your mother would have felt if you had been stolen from her and eaten up!"

"Don't cry," said the good-natured tailor, "you shall keep your children," and he put the prisoner back in

the water. He turned round and found himself standing in front of a half-hollow tree, in and out of which bees were flying. "Here I find the reward of my kindness," he said. "Honey will feed me."

But the queen bee came out threatening him, and said, "If you interfere with my people and disturb the hive our stings will drive into your skin like ten thousand red-hot needles! Let us alone and go your way, and another time we will be of service to you."

The little tailor saw that here, too, there was no succour. "Three empty dishes and nothing on the fourth," he said, "is hardly a satisfying meal." So he dragged himself with his empty stomach into the great city, where he arrived at noon. He entered a tavern and sat down to table, ate, and was filled. Directly he was satisfied he exclaimed, "Now I will work!" He went round the town searching for a good situation, and this was not hard to find, for he was master of his trade and knew it in all its branches. He soon made a reputation, and was quite the fashion, every one wanting his coat to be cut by the little tailor. Every day his fame increased, "And though I cannot become more perfect in my art," he thought, "my prospects grow brighter daily." At last the king appointed him his Court tailor.

But how strangely are things arranged in this life! On the very same day his former comrade the cobbler was made Court cobbler. When the latter saw the tailor with two sound eyes in his head his conscience pricked him. "Before he is revenged on me," he thought, "I must try and dig him a grave." But he who would dig a grave for others often tumbles into it himself. In the evening at dusk the cobbler slunk to the king and said, "Your Majesty, the tailor is a bold fellow, and has the presumption to say he will find and restore the golden crown that was lost centuries ago."

"I am glad to hear it," said the king, and the next morning he summoned the tailor and commanded him to produce the crown instantly or leave the town for ever.

"Indeed," thought the tailor, "only a rogue can give more than he's got. Besides, if the pig-headed king desires what it is impossible for any man to procure, I

will leave the city of my own accord, and not wait till the morning." So he took his bundle, but as he passed out of the gates he was sorry to think he was turning his back on the city where he had been so happy and prosperous.

He then came to the pond where he had made acquaintance with the ducks. The old duck to whom he had spared her duckling was seated on the bank preening her feathers. She recognised him at once and asked why he hung his head.

"You won't wonder," he said, "when I tell you what has befallen me," and he related his story.

"If that's all," said the old duck, "I can give you advice. The crown is in the water, and lies on the ground at the bottom. I'll fetch it for you. Spread your pocket-handkerchief out on the bank." She dived under with her twelve ducklings, and after five minutes they all came above the water with the crown in their midst. They swam with it to the land, and laid the crown on the tailor's handkerchief. You have no idea what a magnificent crown it was. It flashed in the sun like a hundred carbuncles. The tailor tied it up in his handkerchief and carried it to the king, who was charmed to get it and put a chain of gold round his tailor's neck.

When the cobbler saw that his scheme had failed he concocted another. He went to the king and said, "Your Majesty, the tailor has become so conceited he imagines he can make a model in wax of the whole castle and everything inside and outside of it."

The king ordered the tailor to come into his presence, and told him to make a model in wax of the castle and everything inside and outside of it, and it must be exact down to the minutest detail. If so much as a single nail on the wall was left out he would be put in an underground dungeon for the rest of his life.

The tailor thought, "This is worse and worse. No human being can do it," and he threw his bundle over his shoulder and wandered outside the city.

As he came near the hollow tree the bees came flying out, and the queen bee inquired if he had a stiff neck, as he was holding his head crooked.

"I have something on my mind," he said, and told them what it was.

The bees began to buzz and hum together, and then the queen bee said, "Go home and come again to-morrow at this time, bringing with you a large cloth, and all will be well."

He turned homewards, while the bees swarmed on the castle and through the open windows, creeping into every corner and cranny, taking stock of and examining every detail. Then they flew back to their hive and made a model castle in wax with such rapidity that it seemed to grow up like a mushroom. By the evening it was quite ready, and when the tailor came next morning the beautiful model was standing there complete, not a nail on the wall or a tile on the roof missing, and the whole exquisitely delicate, and pure white and smelling of the scent of honey. The tailor packed it very carefully in his cloth and took it to the king, who couldn't admire it enough. It was placed in the large banqueting hall, and the tailor was presented in reward with a stone house to live in.

The cobbler, however, was not to be done, and went a third time to the king, saying, "Your Majesty, the tailor has heard that no water can be made to spring up in the castle courtyard, and he has undertaken to produce a fountain that shall spring as high as a man and be clear as crystal."

So the king sent for the tailor and said, "I insist on your causing to spring up in my courtyard a jet of water such as you have described by this time to-morrow. If you can't do it my executioner shall reduce your height by a head."

The poor tailor, without reflection, ran out of the city gates half-distracted, as this time it was a case of life or death. Great tears rolled down his cheeks.

In this sorrowful plight he met the foal bounding along, now grown into a pretty brown horse. "The hour has come," said the horse, "in which I can repay you for letting me go that day. I know what is the matter, and you shall soon be helped out of your trouble. Get on my back. I could now carry two riders of your size."

The tailor recovered his spirits; he sprang on the horse's back, and was soon galloping at full speed to the town. Straight into the courtyard his steed carried him, and after riding round and round at a dizzy pace there was a sudden explosion and the horse fell on its knees. On the spot the earth cracked and up sprang a jet of water higher than man and horse, and the water was as clear as crystal and the sunbeams danced on it. The king saw it in wonder and admiration, and rushed to the little tailor and embraced him in the sight of everybody.

But even this happiness did not last long. The king had plenty of daughters, but no son. So the wicked cobbler went to the king a fourth time and said, "Majesty, the tailor has not ceased to boast. He says now he can bring your Majesty a son through the air."

The king sent for the tailor and said to him, "If you can get me a son in nine days you shall have my eldest daughter to be your wife."

"A great reward undoubtedly," thought the tailor, "but the fruit grows too high. If I climb to reach it the bough will certainly snap." He went home and sat with crossed legs by his work-table wondering what he should do. "It's no good," he sighed at last, "I must go away. Here I shall never be left in peace."

He took his bundle and hurried out of the city. When he reached the meadows he beheld his old friend the stork, who stood like a sage contemplating a frog, which, after close examination, he finally swallowed.

Then the stork advanced and greeted him. "I see," he said, "that you have your knapsack on your back. Why do you wish to leave the city?"

The tailor told him of the king's behest and of the impossibility of his performing it.

"Don't let your hair turn grey over that," said the stork, "I will help you out of your difficulty. For a long time I have been accustomed to bring babies in arms into the town, so I can easily fetch a little prince out of the well. Go home and keep calm. In nine days from now go to the castle and I will meet you there."

The little tailor went home, and at the appointed time turned up at the castle.

Soon after the stork flew there and tapped at the window.

The tailor opened it, and Cousin Longshanks came in cautiously, and walked gravely and majestically over the marble floor. He had a child in his beak as beautiful as an angel, and it held out its tiny arms to the queen. The stork laid it in her lap, and she hugged it and kissed it rapturously, and was beside herself for joy. The stork before departing took his satchel off his shoulder and left it with the queen. It contained dates and all kinds of sweetmeats which were to be divided among the younger princesses. The eldest was given none because she was to have the jolly little tailor for her husband.

He said, "My mother's words have come true. She always said trust in God and a merry heart would carry a man through all and bring him great happiness in the end."

The cobbler had to make the shoes in which the tailor danced at his wedding, and afterwards he was ordered out of the city. He took the path that led to the gallows. Worn out with rage, baffled malice, and the heat of the day, he threw himself down to rest. As he shut his eyes two crows swooped down with a scream from the gallows and picked out his eyes. He rushed into the forest, mad with pain, and must have perished there, for he was never seen or heard of again.

HANS HEDGEHOG

THERE was once a peasant who had enough money and property for comfort, but his happiness was marred by one thing—his wife had no children. Often when he went to the town with other peasants they mocked him and asked him derisively why he had no children. This made him angry, and one night when he came home he exclaimed, "I will have a child somehow, even if it should be a hedgehog."

Very soon afterwards his wife had a child that was half a hedgehog and half a boy, and when she beheld it she was

so horrified she exclaimed, "See what you have done. This is your fault. We are bewitched."

The man said, "It can't be helped; the boy must be christened, though it won't do to have a godfather for him."

"The only name he can be christened is *Hans Hedgehog*," said his wife.

After the christening the parson remarked that it would be impossible to put the infant in an ordinary bed, because of his prickles. So a bed of straw was made up behind the stove and Hans Hedgehog laid upon it. He could not suck his mother either, because he would have pricked her, so he lay behind the stove till he was eight years old; and the father wearied of him, and wished he would die. But he did not die.

Then it happened that a great fair was coming off in the town, and the peasant, who was going to it, asked his wife what fairing he should bring her.

"A joint of good meat," was the rejoinder, "and two loaves of white bread."

Next he asked the maidservant what she would have, and she said, "Some toffee and a pair of thread stockings."

Then he turned to Hans Hedgehog and asked, "My Hedgehog, what shall I bring you?"

"Please, dear father," he replied, "bring me bagpipes."

When the peasant came home from the fair he gave his wife the meat and loaves, the maidservant her toffee and stockings, and then he went behind the stove and presented Hans with the bagpipes.

"Thank you, dear father," said the boy. "Now will you kindly go to the smith's and order my bantam cock to be shoed, and I will ride away on it and never come back."

The father was delighted at the proposal, went to have the cock shoed, and when it came Hans Hedgehog mounted it and rode way, followed by pigs and donkeys, which he intended to keep in the forest.

When he reached the forest his cock flew with him on to the top of a tree, where he sat watching his herd of donkeys and pigs; and he sat there for years and his father knew nothing about him. He made beautiful, strange music on his bagpipes, and one day a king who was travel-

ling through the forest heard the sound; he was exceedingly puzzled to know where it came from, and sent his lackeys to look.

After hunting about they could discover nothing except a little animal like a bantam cock on the branch of a tree, and astride the cock sat something in the shape of a hedgehog making music.

Then the king instructed one of his servants to ask Hans Hedgehog why he sat perched on a tree, and if he could show him the way, which he had missed, into his country.

Hans climbed down and said he could show the way, but first the king must give a written promise, to which he must sign his name, that the first thing he encountered in the courtyard of his castle on his return should be given to Hans.

The king thought, "Easily done. A hedgehog will certainly not understand anything I write." So he took ink, pen, and paper, scribbled something, and Hans showed him the path.

He arrived home safely. His daughter had seen him coming in the distance, and now joyously rushed out to meet and kiss him. This reminded him of Hans the Hedgehog, and he told her what had befallen him, and how he had signed away to a most extraordinary creature the first thing he should meet in his courtyard on his arrival —a creature, he went on to relate, which sat astride a cock and played most exquisitely on the bagpipes. "However, I wrote on the document," said the king, "'Hans shall have nothing,' for I knew he couldn't read. So it is all right."

The princess looked relieved, and said she could never have gone to a hedgehog.

Hans the Hedgehog meanwhile still sat gaily perched up a tree and blew his bagpipes.

It happened soon that another king came that way, as he and his servants and page were lost too in the forest. He heard the beautiful music, and said to his page, "Go and see what it means."

The page ran to the tree and saw the cock aloft, with Hans sitting on it. The page asked what he was doing up there.

"I am keeping my donkeys and swine. What is your pleasure?"

The page answered they had lost their way and could not find it unless he put them on the right road.

Then Hans and his cock came down from the tree, and he told the old king he would show him the way if he would vow in writing to give him the first thing or person he met on entering his royal domain.

The king readily consented, and put his signature to the promise.

Then Hans rode before on his cock-horse and pointed out the road.

The king arrived safely in his kingdom, and as he entered his grounds his only daughter, who was very lovely, ran to meet him, threw her arms round his neck, kissing him and saying how pleased she was to see her old father again.

She asked him to tell her about his travels, and he related how he had lost his way in the forest and been shown the right path by a curious creature—half hedgehog, half man—sitting astride a cock. He played superbly on the bagpipes; and the king said he had promised him the first thing he met at home, and that was herself, and it made him wretched to think of parting from her.

She said that for his sake she would go, if she must.

Hans went on keeping his flock of swine, and it increased and became at last so huge that the whole forest was full of swine. Then Hans the Hedgehog thought he would leave the forest, and sent word to his father to hire room in all the stables and styes in the village, for he was coming with such a tribe that any one who had a mind to slaughter might slaughter to his heart's content.

His father was vexed when he heard the news, for he thought Hans was dead long ago.

So Hans drove his beasts into the village, and there was such a killing, slaughtering, and screeching as you never heard of.

Afterwards Hans said, "Father, dear, let the smith shoe my cock, and I will ride away again and never come back."

His father willingly had the cock shoed, and was glad to think Hans was going and never coming back.

Hans Hedgehog rode straight to the first kingdom, where the king had given orders that if ever a creature appeared mounted on a cock and playing a bagpipe, he was to be shot down by a thousand arrows before he got to the castle. Thus, when Hans arrived bayonets were turned on him, but he spurred his cock and it flew high in the air over the castle gates and in at the king's window. He cried out to the king to give what he had promised, or he would have the lives of him and his daughter.

So the king tried to comfort his daughter, and advised her to set off with Hans in order to save his life and her own. She dressed herself in white, and her father gave her a carriage with six horses and magnificent powdered flunkeys, and he also gave her money and jewels. She seated herself in the carriage beside Hans, with his cock and bagpipes. They said adieu, and the king thought he would never see his child again.

But things turned out differently from what they expected, for after driving a little way out of the town, Hans Hedgehog tore her clothes off with his prickly skin and pricked her till she bled, and then he said, "That is the reward of your pride and your father's falseness. Go! I don't want you," and he drove her home, where she lived disgraced for the rest of her life.

After that Hans rode on his cock with his bagpipes into the country of the second king who had lost his way in the forest. He had commanded that when any one answering to the description of Hans Hedgehog should come, the sentries were to present arms, shout vivats, and let him be shown into the castle. But when the lovely daughter of the king saw him she was frightened at his strange appearance, though she did not show her distaste.

Hans was welcomed by her, they were wedded, and he sat at her right hand at the royal table. At night, on retiring, she thought with terror of his prickles; but he assured her she needn't be afraid, for he would not hurt her for the world. He then asked the old king to put four men on guard in the ante-chamber, and to request them to make a big fire there; then, when he went into the bed-chamber, he would crawl out of his hedgehog skin,

and the men must spring forward, take it away, and burn it in the fire.

On the stroke of eleven he entered the bridal-chamber, shook off his crust of prickles, and left it on the floor beside the bed. Instantly the men came forward, seized it, and threw it into the fire. He now lay in bed in the shape of a man, but he was coal-black. The king sent for his physician, who washed him carefully with balm and ointment till he became white, and was a fair young nobleman to look at. The princess, when she saw the transformation, was overjoyed, and the next day there was great feasting and rejoicing, and Hans Hedgehog succeeded to the throne.

Years afterwards he went with his wife to visit his father, who said at first he couldn't be his son, because he had been born with prickles. But afterwards he was convinced, and returned with his son to his kingdom, a proud and happy old man.

THE SHROUD

A MOTHER had a dear little boy of seven years old. He was so sweet and pretty that no one could look at him without loving him. To her he was dearer and more precious than anything on earth. It happened that the little boy fell suddenly ill and God took him. The mother was inconsolable, and she wept bitter tears night and day. After he was buried the child appeared in the night at the place where in life he had sat or played, and then vanished when morning came.

As his mother never ceased to mourn and cry, he came one night in his little shroud, and a wreath on his head, and sat at the foot of her bed.

"Mother," he said, "do stop crying; otherwise I can't rest in my coffin, for my shroud is so wet with your tears which fall on it."

On hearing this his mother looked frightened and cried no more. And the next night the child came again, holding in his hand a little light.

"Look," he said, "now my shroud is nearly dry, and I can rest in my grave."

After that the mother asked God to comfort her in her grief, and bore it with patience and resignation.

The child never appeared again, but slept peacefully in his earthy little bed.

THE JEW IN THE THORNBUSH

A RICH man once had a man-servant, who had served him faithfully. He was the first up in the morning, and the last in bed at night, and when there was some hard piece of work to be got through which no one else would attempt, he was always the first to volunteer to do it. Then he never grumbled, but was contented with anything, and always cheerful. When his year of service was over his master did not pay him any wages; for he thought, "That is the best way; I shall save something by it; and he will not go away, but will stay quietly in my service."

The servant, on his part, said nothing about it, but did his work in the second year as he had done in the first; and when at the end of that time he did not yet receive any wages, he bore it quietly and remained still longer.

When the third year had expired the master considered again, and put his hand in his pocket, but he did not bring anything out. Then at last the servant began to speak, and said, "Master, I have served you honestly for three years; be so kind as to give me what is lawfully mine; I wish to go away, to look about me in the world."

"Yes, my dear servant," replied the miserly master, "you have served me zealously, and you shall be suitably rewarded."

Thereupon he put his hand in his pocket, brought out three farthings, and counted them out separately to his servant. "There," said he, "there is a farthing for you for each year; that is great and liberal pay, such as you would receive from few masters."

The good servant, who knew little about the value of money, took his capital, and thought to himself, "Now,

you've plenty in your pocket; why should you plague yourself any longer with cares and with heavy work?"

So he went away, up hill and down dale, singing and springing to his heart's content. Now it happened that in passing by a bush he encountered a little man, who stepped from behind it and addressed him with, "Where are you going, brother Lightheart? You don't seem to carry many cares, so far as I can see."

"Why should I be sad?" answered the servant. "I've plenty of money; I have three years' wages jingling in my pocket."

"How much may there be of your treasure?" asked the little man.

"How much?—three full farthings, well told."

"Listen," said the dwarf. "I am a poor, needy man; give me your three farthings. I can't work any more; but you are young, and can easily earn your living."

The servant was a good-hearted fellow; and, pitying the little man, he handed him his three farthings, and said, "Be it so; I shall be able to manage without them."

Then the dwarf said, "Because you have shown your good disposition, I will grant you three wishes—one for each of the farthings—and these three wishes shall be fulfilled."

"Aha!" said the young fellow; "I see you are a magician. Well, if it is to be so, my first wish is for a blowing-tube, with which I hit everything I aim at; my second, for a fiddle, which will set every one dancing who hears it sound when I play upon it; and my third wish is, that when I make a request of any one, he may not be able to deny it me."

"You shall have all that," answered the little man; and he thrust his hand into the bush—and behold! there lay the fiddle and the blow-pipe all ready, as if they had been ordered. The dwarf gave them to the servant, and said, "Whatever you choose to ask for, no man on earth shall refuse."

"What can I desire more?" said the servant to himself; and he marched on more gaily than ever.

Soon afterwards he met a Jew with a long beard, who

was standing listening to the song of a bird that sat perched high up on the top of a tree. "My word!" the Jew was exclaiming—"that such a little creature should have such a powerful voice—if it were only mine!—if some one would only put a little salt on its tail!"

"If that's all," said the young fellow, "the bird shall soon come down;" and he aimed with his blow-pipe, blew, and the bird came fluttering down into the hedge of thorns. "Go, you rogue," said he to the Jew, "and pick up the bird out of the hedge."

"My word!" cried the Jew, "there's always help to be found when needed;" and he went down on all fours and began to work his way into the bush. When he was just in the middle, among the thorns, the jolly servant was seized with a strange whim that made him take his fiddle and begin to play it. The Jew immediately began to lift up his legs and to jump about; and the more the young man played, the better went the dance. But the thorns tore the Jew's shabby coat, combed out his beard, and pricked and stung him all over. "My word!" he cried out, "what's the use of fiddling? Pray leave off, sir; I don't want to dance!"

But the servant would not leave off; for he thought, "You've pricked and stung many people in your time, and now the hedge of thorns shall do the same thing to you." So he began again to play, and the Jew had to jump higher and higher, till the fragments of his coat remained hanging on the bushes.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" cried the Jew, "I'll give the gentleman whatever he asks, if he'll only leave off fiddling. I'll give him a whole bagful of gold!"

"If you're so liberal," cried the servant "I'll leave off playing my music; but I must say that for you—you're a first-rate dancer;" and he took the bag of money and went his way.

The Jew stood looking after him, and remained silent until the servant was far away and quite out of sight, then he called out with all his might, "You miserable musician, you beershop fiddler you just wait till I catch you alone! I'll hunt you till the shoes drop off your feet, I will! You worthless rascal, you'll have to put two halfpennies in your

mouth before you can say you're worth a penny!" and so he went on, scolding and calling every bad name he could think of. And when he had thus worked off part of his rage, and eased his heart, he ran to the town, to the judge. "My lord judge," he cried, "alas, and woe is me! see how a wicked person has robbed and ill-treated me on the high road, till a stone of the earth might have been softened and had compassion! My clothes torn! my body scratched and pricked all over! my little fortune stolen, purse and all—all my shining ducats, each one more beautiful than the last! For justice' sake, have the fellow thrown into prison."

"Was he a soldier," asked the judge, "who disfigured you in that manner with his sabre?"

"No, indeed," answered the Jew, "he hadn't a naked sword, but he has a blow-pipe hanging over his shoulder, and a fiddle round his neck; the rascal may easily be known by them."

The judge sent his officers out to seek him; and they found the good servant, who had gone on quite slowly, and they found the purse of gold upon him. When he appeared before the court, he said, "I did not touch the Jew, nor did I take his money from him—he offered it to me of his own accord, to induce me to leave off fiddling, because he could not stand the music.

"Not a bit of it," cried the Jew. "He sticks to his lies as flies stick to the wall."

The judge would not believe the accused, and said, "That's a pretty excuse! no Jew would do such a thing;" and he condemned the good servant to the gallows, for having committed a highway robbery.

As they were leading him away, the Jew exclaimed, "Ah, you rascal! you rogue of a musician! you're going to be rewarded now, according to your merits."

The servant went quietly up the ladder with the hangman, but when he got to the top step he turned round and said to the judge, "Grant me one request before I die."

"Yes, I will," answered the judge, "if you do not beg for your life."

"I don't ask for my life," answered the servant. "I only

ask to be allowed to play on my violin for the last time."

The Jew began crying, in a great fright, "No, no! don't you allow it, don't you allow it!"

But the judge said, "Why should I not let him enjoy that short pleasure? I have granted his request, and I will stand to my word." Besides, he could not refuse, because of the gift the young man had, of having all his requests granted.

The Jew cried out, "Oh dear me! oh dear me! tie me up, tie me tight!"

Then the good servant took his violin, arranged it, and at the first touch of his bow on the strings every one began to shuffle and to fidget about—judge, writers, officers of the court, and all—and the man who was going to bind the Jew dropped the cord out of his hand; at the second note they all pointed their toes, and the hangman let the good servant go, and prepared himself for the dance; at the third note all began to jump and dance; and the judge and the Jew were in the foremost row, and jumped highest of all. Very soon all the people who had come into the market place from curiosity joined in the dance—old and young, stout people and thin—all mingled together; and the dogs which had strayed there stood up on their hind legs and hopped about with the rest. And the longer the musician played, the higher did the dancers jump, so that they began to knock their heads together and to cry out lamentably.

At last the judge, quite out of breath, panted, "I'll give you your life, only leave off fiddling."

The good servant let himself be persuaded, put down his violin, hung it round his neck, and came down from the ladder. Then he went up to the Jew, who was lying on the ground, gasping for breath, and said, "You rogue, confess now where you got the money from, or I'll take my fiddle and begin to play again."

"I stole it, I stole it!" replied the Jew, "but you earned it honestly."

Then the judge ordered them to lead the Jew to the gallows, and to hang him there as a robber.

THE SKILLED HUNTSMAN

THERE was once a young fellow who had learnt to be a locksmith. He told his father he should like to go and seek his fortune in the world. "Yes, go," said his father, "I have no objection," and he gave him money for the journey.

So he travelled about, looking for work. After a time he got tired of locksmith's work, and thought he would prefer to go in for sport. He met one day on his road a forester in a green suit, who asked where he came from and what he wanted to do. He said he was a locksmith's apprentice, but that he was tired of the work and would prefer an out-of-door life. "Will you take me as an apprentice?" he asked the forester.

"Oh yes, certainly, if you like," was the reply.

So the youth accompanied him, and in the course of a few years learnt well, and perfected himself in the business of sport. At parting his master gave him nothing as a reward but an air-gun which, however, had the peculiar and valuable quality of never missing a mark.

The young man, after taking leave of his master, came into a forest which appeared to have no end, for after a day's tramp in it, it seemed as thick as ever. At night he climbed up a tree to be out of the way of wild beasts. Towards midnight he saw a light shimmering in the distance, and he peered through the leaves to make sure where it came from, then threw down his hat on the spot where the reflection lay. Then he climbed down, picked up his hat, and went on.

The further he went the brighter grew the light, and when he came near enough, he saw a great fire, and round it were three giants roasting an ox on the spit. One of them said, "I must now try if the meat is done enough." He tore off a bit and was just putting it into his mouth, when the huntsman shot it out of his hand. "Well, I never!" exclaimed the giant, "a puff of wind has blown it away," and he helped himself to another.

But again the huntsman shot it from his lips. The giant gave the comrade sitting next him a box on the ear

and said angrily, "What do you mean by taking all my tit-bits?"

"I haven't done it," said his neighbour. "It is a sharpshooter over there."

The giant then tried a third time, but couldn't hold the piece of meat in his hand because the huntsman shot it. The giants, after this, said each to other, "He must be an extra good shot who can perform such a feat. We will make use of him," and they called, "Come here, sharpshooter. Sit down by our fire and regale yourself with our refreshments; if you refuse, we'll use force, and you'll repent it."

The youth then advanced and explained that he was a skilled marksman and that whatever he aimed at he never failed to hit. Thereupon they invited him to be one of their gang, and told him of a tower by a lake on the outskirts of the forest, wherein lived a pretty princess whom they wanted to steal. He said, "Right you are. I'll help you in the enterprise."

"There is one difficulty," they explained; "directly any one comes near the place, a little dog begins to bark furiously, and wakes every one up. That is why we have never yet accomplished an entry. Could you undertake to shoot the animal?"

"Yes, certainly," he replied, "it would be child's play."

So he boarded a boat, sailed across the lake, and was on the point of landing when the little dog came out barking, but he took his air-gun and shot it dead. When the giants saw this from the other side, they were delighted and thought they were now quite sure of the princess. But the huntsman determined to survey the field before acting and called to the giants to keep in hiding till he gave them a signal.

He went into the castle, which was still as the grave, every one being asleep. In the first room he came to there hung a silver sabre on the wall; on it was a golden star and the king's initials; on a table close by lay a sealed letter, which he tore open, and read that whoever possessed the sabre could achieve anything in life he wished. So he took the sabre from the wall and girded it on. Next he found himself in the apartment where the king's daughter

lay asleep. She was so beautiful that he stood still and held his breath. He thought, "How can I deliver an innocent maiden like this into the hands of cut-throat giants?" Then he looked round and saw a pair of slippers under the bed; on the right slipper was embroidered her father's monogram, with a star, and on the left her own name, likewise with a star. There was a large silk handkerchief wrapped round her, embroidered with gold, and her father's name on the right side, and her own on the left, in letters of gold. The huntsman took a pair of scissors and cut off the right corner of the handkerchief and put it in his knapsack; then he took the right slipper with the king's monogram and put that in the knapsack too.

The maiden slept peacefully while he was doing this and did not wake when he proceeded to cut a tiny piece out of her nightgown. Then he went softly away, and found the giants waiting for him outside, and they expected him to bring them their victim. But he signalled to them to come in, saying the princess was in his power. He pretended he could not open the gates and directed them to creep through a hole. The first giant approached the hole and the huntsman caught him by the hair, dragged his head through, and then cut it off with the silver sabre, pulling the rest of his body through afterwards. He did the same with the other two, and then, proud and glad that he had spared the princess from falling into such bad hands, he cut out the giants' tongues, laid them in his knapsack, and left the castle. He thought, "I will go and show my father these things, and then travel round the world and seek my fortune."

The king of the castle when he awoke saw the three dead giants lying in his hall. He went to his daughter's chamber and asked if she knew who had killed the giants. She said, "No, dear father. I have been sleeping very sound and I have heard nothing."

And then she got up and found one of her slippers gone. So she looked at her silk handkerchief and found the right corner cut off, and afterwards noticed the slit in her nightgown. The king assembled the whole court and asked who had saved his daughter and slain the giants.

A captain, with only one eye and a repulsively ugly face, said it was his doing, and the king told him he should marry his daughter for his services. The maiden, however, declared she would go out into the world and walk as far as her legs would carry her rather than marry the captain. The king said if that was the case, and she was determined not to marry him, she must take off her royal clothes and put on a peasant woman's attire. He ordered her to go to a china-shop and borrow pots and pans and earthenware to sell in the street.

So she took off her beautiful clothes, put on a peasant's dress, and went to the china-shop.

She chose a selection of crockery, for which she promised to pay in the evening when she had sold something, and then stationed herself at a street corner.

But the king ordered a farmer's waggon to drive over her stall and smash everything to atoms. She burst out crying and exclaimed, "Oh, dear! How shall I ever be able to pay back the china-shop?"

The king thought she would now be forced to marry the captain, but instead she went to the head of the shop and asked to be allowed to borrow more ware. He answered, "No, I must be paid for the other lot first."

Then she returned to her father, crying and lamenting, and said, "Let me go away to the other end of the world." But the king replied—

"I will build a little house for you in the forest. Here you shall live for the rest of your days and cook for any one who comes by. But you must take no money." When the little house was finished, a signboard was hung over it bearing the inscription, "To-day for nothing, to-morrow for something."

She had been there a long time when it got about in the world that a girl lived in the forest who cooked for nothing. The huntsman heard of it too, and thought, "That sort of thing will do for you. You are poor and have no spare cash to spend on food."

So he took his air-gun and knapsack in which he still kept the things he had brought away from the castle, and set out in search of the little house bearing the device, "To-day for nothing, to-morrow for something."

He had, too, not forgotten to put on the sword with which he had beheaded the three giants, and thus equipped he appeared at his destination. He was charmed with the pretty hostess of the free coffee-tavern, and ordered something to eat. She asked where he came from and where he was going, and he said, "I am travelling about the country." Then she asked where he had got the sword on which her father's name was engraved. He replied, "With this blade I chopped off the heads of three giants," and as proof of his words took the tongues out of his knapsack and showed her her slipper, the snip off her handkerchief, and the piece of nightgown.

Full of delight, she exclaimed, "You are the man who saved my life!"

So they went together to the old king, and she took him aside and told him it was the huntsman who had killed the giants that night when she slept, and when the king was shown the proofs, he did not doubt the truth of the story and said he was glad the mystery had been cleared up and that she should marry her brave deliverer. He was then dressed as a strange gentleman, and invitations were sent out for a banquet.

When the guests assembled at table, the ugly captain sat on the left of the princess and the huntsman on the right. The captain took him for a distinguished stranger come on a visit. After dinner, the old king said to the captain he wanted to ask him a question and that was, Where were the tongues of the giants he had slain?

The captain replied they had none.

"Really," said the king, "but every creature has a tongue. And what ought to be done to the man who contradicts me?"

"He ought to be lynched," responded the captain promptly.

Then the king said he had pronounced his own sentence, and commanded that the captain should be drawn and quartered immediately.

The princess was married soon after to her brave huntsman, and when the old king died he inherited the throne.

THE THRESHING-MACHINE

A PEASANT once went out to plough with a pair of oxen. When he arrived at the field the horns of the oxen began to grow and went on growing bigger every hour, till when it was time to take them home he could not get them through the gate. Fortunately, a butcher passed at that moment, and took them off his hands. The butcher also promised to pay him for a sack of rape-seed at the rate of a Brabantine thaler for every grain.

The peasant went home to fetch the rape-seed and on the way to the butcher's he dropped a grain, so he was one Brabantine thaler to the bad. But as he came home again he found the seed he had dropped grown into a great tree that almost touched the sky. He thought, "Here's an opportunity of seeing what the angels are doing."

He clambered up the tree and saw the angels threshing oats, and as he watched them his perch began to waver, and on glancing below he became aware that some one was going to hew the tree down.

"It wouldn't be pleasant to get pitched down head foremost," he said to himself.

In his predicament he could think of nothing better to do than to catch up a handful of chaff from the floor of heaven and to twist it into a rope to let himself down by. He also helped himself to a hoe and a threshing-machine.

He alighted in a deep, deep pit, and it was a good thing that he had the hoe, for with it he hoed himself a staircase and mounted it, taking with him the threshing-machine as evidence that his story was true.

THE TWO ROYAL CHILDREN

MANY years ago there lived a king who had a son of whom it was foretold that when he reached the age of sixteen he would be killed by a stag. One day when he had grown into a tall youth he went out hunting and lost his way.

Suddenly he saw a very big stag. He took aim and shot at it several times, but always missed it. He then followed it out of the forest, when all of a sudden the stag changed into a big, strong man, who said, "At last! I have worn out six pairs of glass skates in looking for you, and now I've got you!"

The enchanted stag was a king who lived in a large castle, to which he dragged the prince through a lake. He dined with the king, and after dinner the king said, "I have three daughters, and I wish you to stand guard over the eldest one from nine o'clock at night till six o'clock in the morning. Every time the clock strikes I shall call out to you, and if you don't answer you must die; but if you do answer you shall marry the princess."

As he was going upstairs to perform his duties the princess said to a stone figure, "Whenever you hear my father calling out, and the prince forgets to answer, you must answer for him."

The stone figure nodded its head first quickly, and then more and more slowly till it stopped altogether.

The prince composed himself to sleep on the door-mat outside the princess's room.

The following morning the king expressed himself satisfied with the way in which the prince had discharged his duties. "But," he said, "I must consider a little before I give you my daughter. I will set you to-night to watch over the second princess, and I shall again call out every hour, and if you don't answer you must die."

Again on the way upstairs they passed a stone figure, but a bigger one than before, and the second princess said to it, "When my father calls out answer him."

The figure nodded quickly at first, and then more slowly till it stopped.

The prince went to sleep on the door-mat outside the second princess's room.

The next morning the king again praised his watchfulness, but again excused himself from keeping his promise, saying he must think over first the advisability of giving him his second daughter in marriage. "Meanwhile," he said, "I want you to keep watch over my third and

youngest daughter. If you don't answer when I call you'll have to die."

On his way to bed this time a bigger stone figure than ever stood on the stairs, which the youngest princess addressed thus, "When my father calls out answer him." And the figure nodded quickly, and then slowly till it stopped nodding.

The prince lay down to sleep on the door-mat outside the youngest daughter's room. And in the morning the king said—

"Although you have certainly been vigilant I cannot give you this daughter before you have cut down every tree in a big wood close at hand. You must then pile it up into big stacks and have finished the work by six o'clock to-night." He then presented him with some tools, an hour-glass, and a glass saw.

When the prince came to the wood he tried his hatchet, but after the first blow it broke into a thousand smithereens. He was very sick at this and sat down to cry.

At midday the king said to his daughters, "One of you must go and take the prince his dinner."

The two eldest ones declined to do it and said, "Let our youngest sister do it."

So the youngest daughter went. When she came to him she inquired how he was getting on.

"Oh, I am indeed most wretched," he answered.

She tried to persuade him to sit down and eat his dinner, assuring him he would feel better afterwards.

"No," he said, "how can I eat when I am doomed?"

But the princess succeeded in making him eat, and afterwards she said, "I will sing to you, and that will cheer your spirits."

So she began to sing very sweetly, and he fell fast asleep.

Then the princess took out her white handkerchief, made a knot and knocked three times on the ground, saying, "Workmen, come up," and immediately an army of dwarfs appeared and asked what she wanted.

She said, "You have to cut down the whole of this wood and arrange the timber in stacks. The work must be completed in three hours."

The dwarfs summoned all their relations and friends to come and help. In three hours' time they announced to the princess that the task was done, and she knocked again on the ground, saying, "Workmen, go home."

Instantly they every one vanished. When the prince woke up he was intensely relieved to find all his work done.

"When the clock strikes six," said the princess, "come home."

This he did, and the king inquired, "Have you cut down the wood?" and he replied, "Yes."

At dinner the king said, "I can't let you marry my daughter even yet, you must earn her first. I have a large pond I want cleared out till the water is clear as a looking-glass and one can see all manner of rare fish in it."

The next morning the king gave him a glass shovel and said, "Be ready at six o'clock to-night."

Directly the prince tried to use the shovel it stuck in the mud and the handle smashed into a million pieces. Again he was plunged into depths of despondency.

The princess came with his dinner and asked as before how he was getting on, and the prince replied that he saw nothing before him but death. She persuaded him, however, to eat his dinner and again sang to him till he fell asleep.

She then took out her handkerchief, made a knot, and knocked three times on the ground, saying, "Workmen, come up."

The dwarfs appeared at once, asking what she wanted.

"I want you in three hours to clean out this pond. The water must be clear as a looking-glass and all sorts of fish must swim in it."

Again the dwarfs called all their relations and friends to help them, and they completed the work in the time stated.

The princess then tapped the ground and exclaimed, "Workmen, go home," and they all disappeared. She then left the prince and told him to come home at six.

In response to the king's question, "Is the pond ready?" he replied, "Yes, it is."

The king appeared delighted, but at dinner he said, "If you want my daughter you must perform one more task. There is a big mountain close by, and it is covered with rose-bushes. Cut these down and build a castle on the top of the mountain. The castle must be prettier than any castle ever heard or dreamt of, and every room in it must be exquisitely furnished."

In the morning the king gave him an hour-glass and a glass gimlet, and he was told the work must be done by six. After cutting down one rose-bush he broke the glass gimlet and became very sad and hopeless. He then saw his love coming to his rescue and went to meet her. After he had told her all she made him eat and then sang him to sleep.

The princess once more took out her handkerchief, knotted it, and tapped on the ground, calling, "Workmen, come up," and up came the dwarfs to receive orders.

She said to them, "You have to cut down all these rose-bushes, build a very beautiful castle on the top of the mountain and furnish every room in it. It must all be finished in three hours.

The dwarfs summoned all their relations and friends to help and set to work.

By six all was complete, and they came to tell the princess, who took her handkerchief, tapped on the ground, and said, "Workmen, go home," whereupon they all vanished.

The prince was in great glee to find all done when he woke up, and he and the princess went home together.

The king asked, "Is the castle ready?"

"Yes," replied the prince.

But at dinner the king said, "I cannot give you my youngest daughter before the two others are married."

They were in despair when they heard this, and they planned to run away.

They had not gone far when the princess saw her father coming after them. "Oh!" she exclaimed, "what are we to do? Ah, I know! I won't be taken home again. I will change you into a rose-bush and I will be a rosebud growing on it."

When the king came to the spot there was the rose-

bush and the rosebud. He wanted to pluck the latter, but the thorns pricked him so terribly he had to give up the idea. When he went home again alone the queen was very angry, and said if he had only picked the rose the tree would certainly have followed. So he started off again to make another attempt.

The two lovers were much farther on by this time, so he had to run very fast to overtake them.

When the princess saw him coming she said, "What shall we do? I know! I will change you into a church and myself into a parson, and I will get in the pulpit and preach."

The king came up, puffing and blowing, entered the church and heard the parson's sermon, and then went home.

The queen was excessively angry and said, "You good-for-nothing! Why on earth didn't you bring the parson home with you? The church would have followed him. Now I will go myself."

She went a great many miles, and at last espied the princess in the distance.

"Alas! here's my mother coming now," exclaimed the princess. "I must now change you into a pond and myself into a fish."

So when the queen arrived at the spot where she had expected to find her daughter there was nothing but a pond with a fish splashing about in the middle of the water. In vain she tried to catch the fish, and then she attempted to drink the pond empty in order to get hold of it. But, of course, she didn't succeed. "I must give it up as a bad job," she said at last. "I am of no more use than the king." Afterwards she coaxed them to come to her, and she gave her daughter three walnuts, saying they would one day be useful to her. And then she let the young people continue their journey.

They came to the castle where the prince had been born, and they put up in the village. The prince said to the princess, "Wait here while I go to the castle, and I will return with a retinue and carriage to fetch you."

Every one was rejoiced to see him home again, and made a great fuss over him.

He told them he had a bride in the village, and that he must fetch her in the carriage. So the carriage was ordered, but just as the prince was getting into it the old queen, his mother, kissed him on the lips and he forgot everything he had done or was going to do.

The mother at once ordered the carriage to go back to the stables, and they all went into the castle again.

The poor princess waited and waited in the village, but no one came to fetch her. So after a time she took a situation at a mill not far from the castle. She was obliged to work hard and sit every afternoon by the river washing her pots and pans. But the miller was a kind master, and she stayed with him a long time.

One day the prince's mother took a walk along the river and saw the poor girl. She remarked to her companions on her beauty, and they all gazed at her, though, of course, they hadn't a suspicion who she was.

Meanwhile the queen had chosen a bride for her son. She came from a far-away country, and report said she was extremely lovely. Almost directly she arrived at the castle the nuptial festivities began. The poor girl at the mill asked leave to go and see the wedding. The kind miller consented, and she opened one of her walnuts and found there an exquisite costume, which she put on, and thus arrayed went to the church. She seated herself near the altar, and every one noticed her, and thought how pretty she looked. When the bride and bridegroom arrived they came up to the altar, and just as the priest was going to marry them the bride glanced sideways and saw the strange lady in the beautiful dress. She got up from her knees and said she would only be married to the prince in a dress like that. So the wedding party was broken up and every one went home again.

The strange lady was asked if she would sell the dress. She replied that she wouldn't sell it, but if she were granted a favour the bride should have it for nothing. When they asked her what the favour was she said she wanted to sleep the night on the door-mat outside the prince's door. This was permitted her, but first of all the servants were told to give the prince a sleeping draught.

She lay down on the mat and began loud lamentations.

Did she not help him to cut down a wood, to clear a pond, build a castle? Had she not, to save his life, changed him into a bush, a church, and at last into water? And now had he forgotten everything?

The prince, of course, didn't hear a word of her lament, but the servants heard all.

The next day the bride wore the stranger's beautiful dress and went to church with the bridegroom. Meanwhile the girl had opened the second walnut and came arrayed in even a lovelier garment than the first.

Everything happened over again.

The girl slept on the door-mat outside the prince's room, and again the servants were ordered to administer a sleeping draught. But the servants did not obey; instead, they gave him something to keep him awake, and when she began her lamentations again the prince heard, and things came back to him. He got up instantly and would have gone to her at once, but the queen had locked the door. The next morning he sought out his true love and told her how it was he had lost his memory. She now opened her third walnut and found a dress more beautiful still than the other two. In this she went to church with the prince and was married to him. Pretty children strewed their path with flowers, and theirs was one of the happiest and most jocund of weddings. The wicked old queen-mother and the other girl had to leave the castle by the next train.

Whoever told this story originally must have been tired at the end.

THE CLEVER LITTLE TAILOR

Once there lived a princess who was terribly proud. When a suitor came she gave him a riddle to guess, and if he could not guess it he was sent away in shame and disgrace. She also had it proclaimed that whoever could answer her question should marry her; and any one who wished might come and try.

Now it happened at last that three tailors dwelt together —the two elder had stitched many a neat piece of work

and thought they could not fail of success, but would be sure to hit the answer; the third was a little useless vagabond who did not even understand his trade, but thought he would have luck, for he had nothing else to depend upon. The two others, indeed, said to him, "Stay at home, you won't get far with your little bit of wit." But the little tailor took it very coolly, and said he had made up his mind, and would contrive to get on in some way or other; and so he went out as grand as if all the world belonged to him.

Then all three announced themselves to the princess, and invited her to lay her riddle before them, for they were the right people; and their wit was so fine that it could be threaded through a needle's eye.

Then the princess said, "I have two kinds of hair on my head—of what colour are these?"

"If that's all," answered the first, "it must be black and white, mixed—like the cloth they call pepper and salt."

"Your guess is wrong," replied the princess; "let the second man try."

"Then," said the second, "if it is not black and white, it must be brown and red—like my father's Sunday coat."

"Your guess is wrong," cried the princess; "let the third man try. I can see it in his face that he certainly knows it."

Then the little tailor stepped forward and said, "The princess has a silver and a golden hair in her head, and those are the two colours."

When the princess heard that she turned pale and almost sank down from fright, for the little tailor had guessed her riddle, and she had believed that no one on earth would puzzle it out. When she had recovered herself, she said, "You have not won me yet; there is one thing more that you must do. Down in the stable there's a bear, and you must pass the night in his company; if you are still alive when I get up in the morning, you shall marry me."

She thought to get rid of the little tailor in this way, for the bear had never let any man escape alive who had once come within reach of his paws. But the little tailor was not in the least frightened, and said merrily, "A good heart is half the battle."

When the evening came, our little tailor was taken down to where the bear lay. The bear wanted to run at the little chap at once, to give him a warm welcome with his great paws. But the little tailor cried, "Softly, softly; I'll very soon quiet you."

And quite deliberately, as if he had not a care in the world, he brought some walnuts out of his pockets, cracked them with his teeth, and ate the kernels. When the bear saw it, he wanted to have some walnuts too. The little tailor put his hand in his pocket and gave him a handful, but instead of walnuts they were pebble-stones.

The bear put them into his great mouth, but could not crack one of them, though he gnawed with all his might. "Why, what a stupid fellow I must be," he thought to himself, "that I can't even crack a walnut;" and he said to the little tailor, "I say, do you crack the nuts for me!"

The tailor took the stones, and cleverly changing one of them for a nut, put the nut in his mouth, and crack! it was crushed. "I must try the matter once more," said the bear, "when I see it done, it seems as if I could do it too."

Then the little tailor gave him some more pebbles, and the bear worked away and bit at them with all his might; but he did not succeed in cracking them, as you may very well imagine. When this was over, the little tailor brought out a violin from under his coat, and played a piece on it. When the bear heard the music he could not rest till he began to dance; and when he had been dancing for some time, the thing took his fancy so much that he cried out to the little tailor, "Hark ye, is it difficult to play the fiddle?"

"It's child's play—look, I put the fingers of my left hand on the finger-board, and with my right I pass the bow across the strings, and so it goes merrily, tra la la—tra la la!"

"I should like to play the fiddle," said the bear; "for then I could dance whenever I felt inclined. What do you think? Will you give me a lesson to teach me?"

"With all my heart," replied the little tailor, "if you've a taste for it. But first show me your paws—you see they're of the longest. I must begin by cutting your nails a little for you."

Then he brought a vice, and the bear put his fore-paws in it, and the tailor screwed them in tightly, and said, "Wait

till I come with the scissors ; " and he let the bear grumble as much as ever he would ; and throwing himself down in a corner, on a heap of straw, fell fast asleep.

The princess, who heard the bear growling in the night, made up her mind that he was growling for joy at having demolished the little tailor. In the morning she rose quite in the best spirits ; and when she looked towards the stable, lo and behold there stood the little tailor at the door, merry and well as a fish in the water. Then, as she had openly promised to marry him, she could not make any more objections ; and the king ordered a golden carriage to be brought round, in which she was to go to church with the little tailor to be married.

When they had stepped into the coach, the two other tailors, who had bad hearts, and were jealous of their comrade's good fortune, went into the stable and unscrewed the bear. The brute ran after the carriage in a great rage. The princess, who heard him snorting and growling behind them, was afraid, and exclaimed, " Oh, the bear, the bear ! he's behind us, and wants to eat us up ! "

But the little tailor was a quick-witted fellow. He stood on his head in the carriage, and stuck his feet, close together, out at the window. " Do you see the vice ? " he cried out to the bear. " If you're not off this instant, you shall be screwed up again."

Directly the bear saw that, he turned about and made off ; and the little tailor drove quietly on to the church, and the princess was married to him off-hand, and he lived with her as merry as a lark. And whoever does not believe this story is to pay a fine of half a crown.

YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT

A JOURNEYMAN tailor was travelling about in the world looking for work without success. At last his poverty became so great that he was left without a heller to bless himself with. When reduced to this extremity he happened to meet a Jew. " This man," he thought, " must be rolling in money." So he hardened his heart, and going up to him said, " Your money or your life."

The Jew said, "Spare my life, for I have no money except eight hellers."

The tailor answered, "I'll be bound you have money, and I'll get it out of you." He then used force, and beat the Jew to death. As he was dying, his last words were: "The sun will bring it to the light of day. Your sin will find you out."

The tailor then rifled the Jew's pocket, and found the Jew had told the truth, and that he had possessed only eight hellers. Then he picked up his body, carried it behind some bushes, and pursued his trade.

After journeying some time he came to a town and worked for a master-tailor who had a pretty daughter. He fell in love with her, married her, and settled down to a happy married life.

By the time they had two children both his father and mother-in-law had died, and the young couple had the house to themselves. One morning when the man sat at his table in the window his wife brought his coffee, and as he poured it out in the saucer and was going to drink it, the sun flashed on it, and the reflection came and went on the wall, making a prism. The tailor watched it, and murmured, "Ah, you would bring it all to light, wouldn't you, but you can't manage it!"

His wife said, "What is it, husband? What are you talking about?"

"I may not tell you," he replied.

"If you love me, you must tell me," she insisted; and she assured him that no one else should know, and that she would keep it a profound secret. She worried him with so many questions, that at last he related how once, long years ago, when he was a journeyman, he had been reduced to a penniless condition, and had robbed and murdered a Jew, who when he was dying said, "The sun will bring it to light. Your sin will find you out." The sun, however, had tried, but failed to do anything but reflect prisms on the wall. Then he gave her strict injunctions to say nothing about it to any one, but she went to her godfather, and confided the story to him, swearing him to secrecy, and before three days had passed the whole town knew it.

The tailor was arrested and brought before the judge, and he was sentenced to death. Thus the sun had brought his crime to light, as the Jew had predicted.

THE BLUE LIGHT

THERE was once a soldier who had served his king faithfully for many years. But when peace was declared and the war was over, the king said to the soldier, who had been wounded several times, "Now you can go home, I require your services no longer. I cannot give you further pay, for I only pay those who earn money."

The poor soldier did not know how he should live. He tramped homewards, and on his way found himself in a great forest. When darkness fell, he saw a light which came from a cottage in which an old witch lived. "Give me a bed and something to eat and drink," he said to her, "otherwise I shall perish."

"Ho, ho," she answered, "who would care to feed a deserter gratis? However, I will have compassion on you and take you in, if you will do as I desire."

"What do you desire me to do?" asked the soldier.

"To dig up my garden to-morrow."

The soldier consented, and worked the next day with all his strength. However, he could not get it done by the evening.

"I see," said the witch, "that you can't do any more to-night, so I will keep you another night, and in return you must chop a clump of wood for me into little pieces."

The soldier took the whole day over it, and in the evening the witch proposed he should stay another night.

"To-morrow I have only a very light task for you. Behind my house is an old dried-up well into which I have dropped my light, a blue one, which is never extinguished. You shall fetch it for me."

The next day the old crone led him to the well, and lowered him in a basket. He found the blue light, and made a sign to her to draw him up again. She drew him up again, but when he reached the edge she held out her hand to seize the blue light. But he seeing her evil

design said, "No; I shall not give up the light till I am standing with both feet on the ground." Then the witch lost her temper, let him fall into the well again, and went away.

The poor soldier fell without hurting himself on to the damp bottom. The blue light still burned, but what help was that? He saw death staring him in the face. For a while he sat lost in sad reflection. Then he chanced to put his hand in his pocket and find his pipe, which was half filled with tobacco. "This shall be my last enjoyment," he said; drew it out, lit it with the blue light, and began to smoke. As the smoke rose and floated on the air, a little black man suddenly appeared and said—

"Sir, what are your orders?"

"Why should I order you about?" asked the soldier, astonished.

"I must do all," said the little man, "that you desire."

"Very well," said the soldier, "help me out of the well."

The little man took his hand and led him through a subterranean passage, not forgetting to take the blue light too. He showed him on the way the treasure the witch had collected and hidden here, and the soldier helped himself to as much gold as he could carry.

When he was above ground he said to the little man, "Go, please, bind the witch hand and foot, and take her before the judge."

And in a few minutes she flashed by on the back of a wild tom cat, screaming horribly, and the manikin said, "It is all over, by this time she hangs on the gallows."

Then the little man said, "Sir, I await further orders."

The soldier replied, "Just now I have nothing more for you to do; you can go home, only, if I call you, be ready."

"It is not necessary to call," explained the little man, "you have only got to light your pipe with the blue light and I shall be beside you at once." And he instantly vanished.

The soldier went back to the town. He went to the best hotel, ordered fine clothes, and ordered a room to be splendidly fitted up for him. When it was ready and the soldier installed in it, he called the black manikin and

said, "I served the king faithfully, but he sent me away to starve, and I now wish to be revenged on him."

"What am I to do?" asked the little fellow.

"Go in the night to the palace, and bring me the king's daughter to be my maid-servant."

The little man said, "An easy thing for me to do, but a dangerous undertaking for you."

On the stroke of midnight the door sprang open, and the little man brought in the king's daughter.

"Ah, there you are!" exclaimed the soldier. "Fetch the broom at once and sweep out the room." When she had finished sweeping he called her to his arm-chair, stuck out his legs, and bade her take off his boots. He then threw them in her face, and told her to clean and polish them. She did everything without showing a sign of resistance, silently, and with half-closed eyes. At cock-crow the little black man carried her back to the palace and laid her in her bed.

The next morning she went to her father and told him she had had a wonderful dream. "I was carried as quickly as a flash of lightning through the streets and brought into a soldier's room. I was obliged to serve him like a common servant, sweep the room, and brush his boots. Although it was only a dream, I am as tired as if I had really done it."

"Perhaps it was more than a dream," said the king. "Take my advice and fill your pocket full of peas, then make a tiny hole in it, and if you are fetched again the peas will fall out on the street and show the way."

While the king was speaking the little black man stood by invisible and heard all. At night when he again carried the sleeping princess through the streets, some of the peas, it is true, fell on to the pavement, but they had no effect, for the cunning little man had beforehand strewn all the streets with peas. The princess had again to drudge till cock-crow like a common servant.

The next day the king sent out men, but on a fool's errand, for in every street the poor children were picking up peas and saying, "Last night it must have rained peas."

"We must think of another plan," said the king. "Keep on your shoes when you go to bed, and leave one

behind at the place you are carried to, and I will have it found."

The black manikin heard, and when he was requested to bring the princess to the soldier that night, he said, "I am fairly baffled this time, and if the shoe is found in your room things may fare badly with you."

"Do as I tell you," answered the soldier.

So for a third night the princess came and worked like a servant. But before she was carried away she hid one of her shoes under the bed. The following morning the king had the whole town searched for his daughter's shoe; it was found in the soldier's apartment. The soldier himself who, acting on the entreaties of the little black man, had hurried out at the town gates, was soon overtaken and cast into prison. In the flight he had forgotten his most priceless property, the blue light and the witch's gold. He only had a few ducats on him. Loaded with chains, he was standing at his prison window when he saw one of his comrades go by. He tapped on the window-pane, and as he drew near, said to him, "If you will go to my hotel and fetch a small bundle I have left there I will give you some ducats for your trouble." The comrade ran quickly and brought him the bundle. As soon as the soldier was alone he kindled his pipe with the blue light, and his little black friend stood beside him.

"Don't be afraid," he said, "go with them calmly wheresoever they take you, but don't forget the blue light."

The next day the soldier was tried by the judges, and though he had done nothing wrong, he was to be condemned to death. When he was brought to the gallows he besought the king to grant him a last favour.

"What sort of favour?" asked the king.

"That I may smoke a pipe on the way."

"You may smoke three pipes; but remember it won't save your life," retorted the king.

The soldier drew out his pipe, lit it with the blue light, and before a ring of smoke had floated on the air, the little man, with a cudgel in his hand, stood before him saying, "What orders, my master?"

"Strike the false judges to the ground, and do not

spare the monarch who has treated me so infamously," was the command.

The small man lashed about with fury, and felled every one round him to the earth. The king grovelled on his stomach, and in order to save his life promised the soldier his kingdom and his daughter.

THE WILFUL CHILD

THERE was once a child who was so wilful that she would do nothing her mother told her. For this reason God was not pleased with the child, and let her fall sick. No doctor came to her, and she soon lay on her deathbed. When she was buried and the earth spread over her, one of her arms was stretched forth and came through. More earth was then thrown on the grave, but still the arm showed. Then the mother went herself to the grave and struck the little arm with a scythe, and after that the child rested in peace beneath the earth.

THE THREE CONJURERS

THREE conjurers were travelling about, having learnt their profession. They came to an inn, where they entered to spend the night, and the host asked where they came from and where they were going.

They answered, "We are going about in the world to practise our art."

"Show me what you can do," said the host.

The first conjurer said he could cut off his hand and put it on again the next morning; the second conjurer said he could tear out his heart and heal it the next morning; the third said he could poke out his eyes and put them in again before daylight.

"If all this is true you are indeed accomplished artists," said the host.

They had in their possession an ointment of healing properties, and they always carried a bottle of it about with them. So one cut off his hand, the others took out their eyes and heart, laid them on a plate, and gave them

to the host, and the host gave the plate to a maid-servant, who was told to put it away in a cupboard.

The girl, however, had a clandestine sweetheart who was a soldier. When the host, the three conjurers, and every one else in the house were asleep the soldier came and wanted something to eat. The girl fetched him food from the cupboard and as she was in love forgot to shut the cupboard doors, and then sat on the table and gossiped with her sweetheart.

As the two sat together thus enjoying themselves and not dreaming of any mishap the cat slunk in, and stealing to the cupboard, snatched the hand, heart, and eyes of the three conjurers and ran off with them.

When the soldier had finished his supper and the girl was going to put the dishes back in the cupboard she saw what had happened. Horrified, she exclaimed, "Oh, dear! what will become of me? The hand is gone! the heart is gone! and the eyes, too! To-morrow morning it will be discovered. What, oh! what shall I do?"

"Be quiet!" said the soldier, "I'll help you out of this. Outside a thief is hanging on the gallows. Which hand was it?"

"The right," answered the girl, and gave her lover a sharp knife.

He went and cut off the poor felon's right hand. Then he caught the cat and poked its eyes out, and after that only the heart was wanting. "Haven't you been pig-killing to-day, and doesn't the carcase lie in the cellar?" he asked.

"Yes," said the girl.

"Then that's all right," the soldier exclaimed, and went down to get the pig's heart.

The girl put them altogether on a plate and placed the plate in the cupboard, and when her lover had taken his leave she went to bed with an easy mind.

On the morrow when the three conjurers got up they told the girl to bring them the plate on which lay the hand, heart, and eyes. She brought it, and the first conjurer fixed on the thief's hand with his magic ointment, the second took the cat's eyes and put them in his own sockets, the third appropriated the pig's heart.

The host stood by admiringly, declaring he had never seen anything so wonderful, and saying he would spread their fame far and wide. They then paid their bill and travelled on.

After going a little distance the man who had the pig's heart in his breast did not keep in step, but rushed to a corner and snorted as pigs do. The others tried to hold him by the coat-tails, but it was no good, he would tear himself loose and run to the place where there was the most garbage.

The second conjurer rubbed his eyes and said, "Comrade, I can't make this out. These eyes are not mine! I can see nothing. Please guide me so that I don't fall."

So they went on with difficulty till evening, when they reached another inn. They appeared together in the coffee-room, where in a corner sat a rich gentleman counting out money. The conjurer with the thief's hand prowled round him several times, his arm twitching, and at last when the gentleman turned his back he plunged his hand into the piles of gold and took a handful away.

"Comrade," said the others, "what are you doing? Thou shalt not steal. Shame on you!"

"Aye," said the man, "I couldn't help it. My hand twitched, and I couldn't withhold it."

They all went to bed, and it was so dark in the room you couldn't see an inch before you.

But suddenly the conjurer with the cat's eyes awoke, and waking the others, cried, "Brothers, look round. Don't you see white mice scampering about?"

The others sat up, but could see nothing.

Then one of them said, "It's no good. We have got the wrong ones by mistake. There is nothing to be done but to go back and charge the host of the other inn with swindling." So the next morning they started.

When they got there they told the host that one of them had a thief's hand, another cat's eyes, and a third a pig's heart.

The host said it wasn't his fault, but that the servant girl must be to blame. She, however, hearing her name mentioned made off through the back door, and didn't come back again.

Then the three conjurers demanded a large sum of money in redress, otherwise they said they would set his house on fire. So the host gave them all he had, and they departed; but they would sooner have had their own property.

THE SEVEN SWABIANS

Once seven Swabians lived together. Their names were Master Schulz, Jackli, Marli, Jergli, Michal, Hans, and Veitli. One day they all seven determined to roam about in the world in search of adventure and to accomplish brave deeds. In order that they should not be unarmed and be able to keep together they had one long, strong skewer made. To this skewer all seven held on in a row. First came the biggest and strongest, which was Master Schulz, and then the others in order of size, Veitli coming last.

Now it happened in haymaking time they had been travelling all day, and at evening were still some way from the village where they intended to spend the night, when a great cockchafer flew by them buzzing terribly.

Master Schulz was so terrified that he nearly loosened his grasp on the skewer, and the perspiration broke out all over him.

"Listen, listen," he called to his companions, "isn't that a drum?"

Jackli, who held the position on the skewer next to him, said, "Something is certainly going to happen, for I smell gunpowder and tinder."

At these words Master Schulz took to flight in good earnest, and flew over the hedge into a haycock, where one of the haymakers had left his rake. The steel gave him a sharp blow in the face, and he cried pathetically, "Woe! woe! Take me prisoner. I surrender!"

The other six hopped and tumbled over each other, yelling, "If you surrender we will too!" At last, as no enemy bound them and carried them off, they discovered they had been deceived; and so that people should not get wind of the story and laugh and jeer at them they swore

to each other to keep their own counsel in the matter and hold their tongues. Thereupon they travelled further.

The second danger they encountered had, however, nothing in common with the first. Their way lay over a fallow field, where in the sun a hare lay asleep with his ears pricked up and his great glassy eyes wide open. At the sight of this cruel wild beast they trembled, and consulted as to which course would be the less dangerous to take. If they took flight the monster might certainly pursue and devour them. So they said, "We must engage in a great conflict. Fortune favours the brave." And all seven grasped the skewer with determination, Master Schulz at one end and Veitli at the other. Master Schulz was all for holding on to the skewer, but Veitli became so courageous he wanted to break loose and make an attack. He cried—

"In the name of Swabia strike,
Else you deserve to fall."

But Hans chimed in—

"You can talk big, no doubt,
But let's see you chase the dragon!"

And Michal sang—

"Not a hair of him shall be left,
Even if he were the devil himself."

Then it was Jergli's turn. He spoke—

"And if it's not the devil
Or his mother, it's his step-brother."

A happy idea occurred to Marli—

"Go, Veitli, go forward to the fray,
And I will from behind be your prop and stay.'

Veitli did not, however, obey, and Jackli said—

"Schulz should be the first to go,
He deserves the honour most."

Then Master Schulz took heart and said very pompously—

"Cheerily, cheerily, to the fight,
To fight is all brave people's right."

So in a body they all went for the dragon. As they drew nearer and nearer the enemy Schulz groaned in an agony of fear, "Boo-ho, boo-ho."

At this the hare awoke, and bounded away as fast as it could go.

When Master Schulz saw this he cried out in high delight—

"Potz, my Veitli, what goes there?
See, the monster is a hare!"

The Swabian company now sought further adventures, and came to the Moselle, a mossy, stagnant, deep river, over which there were very few bridges, but instead ferry-boats. The Swabians not knowing this, called out to a man at work on the opposite bank to tell them how they were to get across.

The man, not understanding their language, shouted back in his own, "What? What?"

Master Schulz thought he meant by this, wade, wade through the water, and plunged into the Moselle. In a few minutes he sank in the slime, but the wind wafted his hat across, and a toad sat on it and quacked, "Wat, wat."

The six others on the other side heard this, and said to each other, "Our comrade, Master Schulz, is calling us. If he can get across, why can't we?"

So they all jumped hastily into the water and sank. Thus a frog was the cause of the death of the six gallant Swabians, who were never heard of again.

THE THREE APPRENTICES

Once upon a time three apprentices, who had sworn to keep together on their wanderings and always work in the same town if possible, were discharged by their master,

and had nothing to live on. "What are we to do now?" asked one. "We cannot stay here. Let us wander once more, and if we can find no work in another town we will send to our old employer an address which will always find us and then separate."

The others agreed that this was the best plan. They started, and on the road met a man handsomely dressed, who asked what they were doing.

"We are apprentices," they said, "seeking work. Till now we have kept together, but if we can't find fresh employment we must part."

"There is no necessity for that," said the man. "If you will follow my directions you shall not want for money or work. You shall become great gentlemen and drive your own carriage."

"We will readily follow your directions," said their spokesman, "if it will not injure our peace of soul or chances of salvation."

"No, it certainly won't," said the man, "I have no personal interest in the matter."

But the two other apprentices were looking at his feet, one was a human foot and the other a horse's, and they hesitated about accepting his proposal.

But the man said persuasively, "Be content. I can assure you it is not your souls that are in question, but the soul of another which is already half mine."

They were satisfied with this assurance, and agreed to fall in with the scheme, and the Evil One (for it was he) unfolded it. The three apprentices were to promise to give to all questions the following answers: "All three," "for money," and "that is right." They were to answer thus in turn, and never to add a single word more. If they exceeded this command all their money would vanish, but so long as they obeyed it to the letter their pockets would be full. To start with he gave them as much as they could carry and told them to go to a certain tavern in the town.

When they arrived there the landlord met them and asked, "Will you have any refreshment?"

The first answered, "All three."

"I expect so," said the landlord.

The second answered, "For money."

"Naturally," said the landlord.

The third answered, "That's right."

"Yes, right enough," said the landlord. "Not likely that you can have food without paying for it."

They were now served with excellent fare, and well waited on.

When the bill was presented they overpaid it, and the guests who saw this said, "They must be mad."

"Yes," remarked the landlord; "they certainly are not quite right."

They remained some time at the tavern, and did not utter a single word except, "All three," "for money," and "that's right." They kept their eyes open, however, and saw all that went on. It happened that a wealthy merchant put up at the tavern one day with pots of money. "Look out," he said to the landlord, "that those imbecile apprentice boys don't steal my bags. Carry them upstairs."

The landlord obeyed. As he carried the merchant's portmanteau into his room he felt that it was heavy with gold. He gave the apprentices a bed downstairs, and when every one was asleep, as he thought, he and his wife fetched a hatchet and went in to the merchant and murdered him, and then they went back to bed.

When day came there was a great panic in the tavern, for the rich merchant was found dead in his bed, swimming in his own blood.

To the frightened guests the landlord said, "Those three luny apprentices must have done this." And they agreed no one else could have possibly committed the crime.

The landlord summoned them and asked, "Have you murdered the merchant?"

"All three," said the first.

"For money," said the second.

"That's right," said the third.

"Only listen!" exclaimed the landlord. "They are their own accusers." So they were put in prison to await their trial.

When they saw how things were going they were considerably alarmed, but at night the Evil One visited

them and exhorted them to hold out another day, and not a hair of their heads should be touched.

The next morning they were had up, when the judge asked, "Are you the murderers?"

They replied, "All three."

"Why did you murder the merchant?"

"For money."

"You scoundrels!" exclaimed the judge, "did you not know it was a crime?"

"It was right," was the answer.

"They plead guilty," said the judge, "and are hardened and defiant into the bargain. Lead them at once to the scaffold." So they were led forth, and the landlord was of the company.

Just as the hangman's underlings had seized them, and the executioner was standing with a drawn sword, a coach, drawn by four blood-red foxes, drew up.

"A reprieve! A pardon!" exclaimed the crowd.

The Evil One alighted from the coach in the form of a very distinguished gentleman in dazzling clothes.

"You three," he said, "may now speak. Clear yourselves and relate all you saw. You are innocent."

So the eldest said, "We didn't murder the merchant. The real murderer is there in the crowd," and he pointed to the landlord. "If you want a proof go into his cellar and you will find the corpses of more of his victims."

The judge sent the hangman's underlings to the tavern, and they came back and confirmed the apprentices' statement, so that the judge ordered the landlord to come on to the scaffold and have his head cut off.

Then the Evil One said to the three apprentices, "Now I have the soul I wanted. You are free, and shall be provided for till the end of your days."

THE PRINCE WHO WASN'T AFRAID OF ANYTHING

THERE was once a prince who was tired of being at home in his father's house, and as he was afraid of nothing he said to himself, "I will go out into the world, where I shall

not be bored as I am here, and where I shall meet with plenty of adventures and see wonderful sights." So he took leave of his parents and went away, travelling without stopping from morning to night, not caring where the road led to.

It happened that he came to a giant's house, and as he was tired he sat down by the door and rested. In the yard the giant's playthings caught his eye—a pair of mighty cannon balls and a bull's-eye as big as a man. In a little while, after resting, he took it into his head to play with the cannon balls, took them up and shied them at the bull's-eye. He cried out with delight when he hit it, and enjoyed himself immensely. The giant heard his shouts, looked out of his window, and saw a man not above the average size playing with his toys.

"Worm," he roared, "who gave you strength to roll my cannon balls?"

The prince looked up, saw the giant, and said, "Oh, you clod. Do you think you are the only person in the world with strong arms? I can lift anything I have a mind to."

The giant now descended in great astonishment, and said, "Child of man, if you are constituted thus, go and fetch me an apple from the tree of life."

"What do you want it for?" asked the prince.

"I don't want it myself," answered the giant, "but my sweetheart has a great desire for it. I have been abroad in the world a great deal, but have never come across this tree."

"I'll find it," said the prince, "and I don't see what should prevent my plucking the apple."

"You think it an easy task," said the giant. "The garden in which the tree grows is surrounded by an iron grating, and outside the grating wild beasts crouch to prevent any one going in."

"They will let me in, I'll wager," said the prince.

"Well, even if you get in, and find the tree on which the apple grows, it is not all plain sailing afterwards. Before you can touch the apple you must thrust your hand through a ring which hangs in front of it. This no one has yet been able to achieve."

"But I shall manage it," the prince assured him.

He said goodbye to the giant, and set out over hill and dale, fields and woods, till at last he found the enchanted garden. The wild beasts lay round it, but they had dropped their heads on their paws and slept. They did not wake as he approached, and so he climbed the grating and got safely into the garden. In the middle stood the tree of life, and the red apples gleamed on its branches. He climbed up by the trunk, and as he stretched out his hand to gather an apple he noticed a ring dangling in front of it, but he thrust his hand through it and gathered the apple without any trouble. The ring snapped firmly on his wrist, and he felt all at once a great, strange power course in his veins. When he came down from the tree with the apple he did not climb over the grating again, but shook the great entrance gate, which with a creak swung back on its hinges. He went out, and the lion that lay in front of the gate sprang up and followed him, but not in a fury, only gently and humbly, as if he had been his master.

The prince took the promised apple home to the giant, and said, "There you are. I procured it without trouble."

The giant was overjoyed at his wish being so promptly granted. He hurried off to his sweetheart and gave her the longed-for apple.

She was a beautiful and clever girl, and as she saw there was no ring on his wrist, she said, "I shall not believe you picked the apple till I see the ring on your arm."

The giant replied, "I have only to go home to get it," and imagined it would be a mere trifling business to make the weak, small man give it up. He thereupon demanded the ring from him, but the prince declined to give it up.

"The ring and the apple belong together," insisted the giant, "so if you will not give it to me quietly I must use force."

They wrestled with each other for a long time, but the giant could not master the prince, whom the ring endowed with magic and abnormal strength. Then the giant resorted to cunning to gain his end. He said that the struggle had made him hot, and suggested that they should both bathe in the river to cool themselves. The prince, not suspecting foul play, went, stripped off his clothes, and

with them the ring, and then jumped into the river. Immediately the giant clutched the ring and made off with it, but the lion saw the theft committed, pursued the giant, tore the ring out of his hand, and brought it back to his master. The giant then hid behind an oak tree, and as the prince was engaged in putting on his clothes again he darted forward and put out both his eyes. There the poor prince stood, blind and helpless, not knowing what to do next. The giant came again and took him by the hand, as if he intended to guide him. He led him to the summit of a high rock and left him, thinking to himself, "If he moves a step he will fall over, and I shall get the ring." But the faithful lion had not forsaken his master, and now grasped his coat in his jaws and pulled him gradually back. When the giant came to plunder the dead he discovered that all his craft had been useless. "Is it then impossible to put an end to a mere ordinarily sized human being like this?" he reflected angrily; and again he caught hold of the prince and led him to the edge of another precipice, but the lion saw his intention, and helped his master in the moment of peril. Just as they came to the edge, and the giant let go of the prince's hand, the lion jerked the giant himself into the abyss, and he was smashed to atoms. The faithful beast then led his master away from the precipice and took him to a tree, near which gurgled a clear brook. The prince sat down, and the lion lay beside him and spurted the water in his face with his paw. Scarcely had a few drops touched the empty sockets than his sight came back very dimly, and he could just see a little bird knock itself against a tree-stump close at hand. The bird hopped down to the water, bathed itself, and washed its sore face. The prince took the hint as a sign from God, and went to the brook, stooped down and wiped his eyes and washed his face in it, and when he stood up again his sight was keener and brighter than it had ever been. The prince thanked God for His graciousness, and wandered on, accompanied by his lion.

It happened that he came in time to an enchanted castle. In the gateway stood a young woman of elegant figure and finely cut features, but she was quite black.

She addressed him and said, "Ah, if you could but

deliver me from the evil spell that binds me hand and foot."

"What shall I do?" asked the prince.

The young woman answered, "You must spend three nights in the enchanted castle, but you need not be afraid to do so. If you endure it all without a sound passing your lips I shall be released, and your life will not be taken."

"I am not in the least afraid," the prince assured her, "and with God's help I'll go through whatever may befall me."

So he went gaily into the castle, and as it was dark he sat down in the great entrance hall and waited. Till midnight all was silent. Then suddenly he heard a great rustling noise, and out of every corner and cranny danced a host of small demons. They behaved as if they didn't see him, lit a fire, and began to play cards round it.

Suddenly one of them said, "There is somebody here who doesn't belong to us, and it is his fault that I lose everything."

Then arose the most fearful and ear-splitting shrieks. The prince remained sitting quietly where he was, not feeling any fear at the noise, but the demons jumped on him, and there were so many of them that they were not to be counted. They dragged him about the floor by the hair, tweaked, pinched, pummelled, kicked, and tormented him, but no sound escaped his lips. Towards morning they vanished, and he was so exhausted and stiff he could hardly move a finger; but when it was broad daylight the black maiden came in to him. She carried in her hand a small bottle of the water of life, and after she had washed him with it he felt all his pains and soreness leave him, and fresh life rushing into his lungs.

She said, "You have endured it well for one night, but there are two more to come."

Then she went away again, and he noticed as she walked that her feet had become white.

That night the demons came again and served him worse than before, punching and kicking him till his body was a mass of wounds. He bore it all silently, and the next morning the princess came and healed him with the water of life, and as she departed he saw to his joy that she had already become white as far as her finger-tips.

Now he had only one more night to hold out, but that proved the worst of all. The army of spooks came again, yelling, "Are you there still? You shall be beaten this time within an inch of your life."

So they kicked him backwards and forwards, slapped and thumped him, and pulled his arms and legs nearly out of their sockets, but he bore it all in patience and without a murmur. At last the demons all vanished, but he lay there in a dead faint, too sore to stir; he could not even open his eyes when the maiden came and sprinkled on him the water of life. Then all at once he was free from all pain, and felt stronger and fresher than he had ever felt before, and when he awoke to full consciousness he saw that the maiden was as white as snow and as beautiful as the day.

"Stand up," she said, "and flourish your sword three times over the staircase, and all will be well."

And when he had done this the whole castle was freed from the spell, and the maiden was a rich princess. The servants came and announced that the dinner was already served in the large banqueting hall. So they sat down together, and their wedding was solemnised in the evening with great splendour.

THE HERB ASS

Once upon a time there was a young hunter who went into the wood to pursue his profession. He was of a bright and cheerful disposition, and as he walked along he whistled on a leaf, and an ugly old hag appeared and said to him, "Good-day, dear hunter, you seem merry and content, but I am hungry and thirsty, so give me a trifle."

The good-natured fellow's pity was excited, and he put his hand in his pocket and gave her a bit of his fortune. Then he wished to walk on, but the old hag held him back and said, "Listen, dear hunter. As you have such a kind heart I will give you a present. Go your way, and after a while you will come to a tree on which sit nine birds with a mantle in their claws. Take aim with your fowling-piece and shoot into the middle of them; they will let the

mantle fall, but one of the birds will be hit too, and fall dead on the ground. Take the mantle with you, for it is a wishing-mantle ; you have only to throw it over your shoulders and you will find yourself at once in any place you may wish to go to. Take the heart out of the dead bird's breast, and swallow it whole, and then you will find every morning early when you get up a gold coin under your pillow."

The hunter thanked the wise woman, and thought, "She promises me pleasant things. I wonder if they'll come to pass." But he hadn't gone a hundred steps when he heard a great twittering and calling among the branches, and on looking up he saw a number of birds tearing with their claws and beaks at a cloth which they dragged about. They were fighting and disputing as to which of them should have it. "Really, this is wonderful!" exclaimed the man ; "everything is happening as the old crone said it would," and he took aim and fired till the feathers of the birds thickened the air. The covey took flight, but one bird fell wounded to the earth, and the mantle too dropped at his feet. Then the hunter obeyed the old woman's instructions, ripped up the bird, took out its heart, swallowed it whole, and carried the mantle home.

The next morning when he woke up he remembered the old woman's prediction, lifted his pillow in the air, and saw the flash of a gold coin. The next morning he found another, and so it went on till he had a great pile of gold. Then at last he asked himself, "What is the good of all this wealth if I stay at home. I will use it and see the world."

So he took farewell of his parents, hung up his hunter's wallet and gun, and set off. It happened that one day he came through a dense forest, at the other end of which, lying in the valley, was a sumptuous castle. In one of its windows an old woman and a beautiful girl stood looking out together.

The old woman was a witch, and said to the girl, "There comes a man who has a wonderful treasure in his inside ; we must relieve him of it, daughter dear. It will agree with us better than with him. It is a bird's heart, and every morning he finds a gold coin under his pillow."

She then told the girl her design of robbing him, and the part she was to play in the plot, and with flashing eyes threatened her that if she didn't do as she was told it would be the worse for her.

When the hunter drew near he caught sight of the girl in the window, and said to himself, "I have walked a long way, and will ask to be put up in this nice castle. I have money enough to pay for luxurious quarters." But it was the pretty picture of the girl in the window that attracted him.

He entered the house, and was warmly welcomed and hospitably entertained.

Then the old woman said, "Now we must get hold of that bird's heart; he will never miss it."

She prepared a hot beverage, and when it had boiled poured it in a goblet, which she told the girl to administer to the hunter.

"Here, my dearest," she said, "drink my health."

He took the goblet, drained it, and when he reached the dregs the bird's heart came out of his body. The girl picked it up on the sly and swallowed it herself. From this time forward he found no gold coins under his pillow, but from under the girl's pillow the old witch reaped a harvest. He, however, was so much in love, and so infatuated, that he took no heed of anything but the pretty girl, with whom he passed all his time.

Then the old woman said, "We have got the bird's heart, now we must have the wishing mantle."

The girl answered, "No, let him keep it as he has lost his wealth."

The old woman flew into a passion, and said, "A mantle such as that is a valuable possession. I will, and must have it." So she gave the girl blows, and said if she did not obey her she should rue it.

The girl thereupon did the old woman's behest. She placed herself in the window and gazed at the distant view as if she were miserable.

"Why do you stand there looking so sad?" asked the hunter.

"Ah, my dear," she gave answer, "over there lies the granite-mountains, where the costliest jewels and precious

stones come from. I cherish so great a longing for them that it makes me sad to think how impossible it is to get them. Only the birds that fly can go there. Men never."

"If that is the cause of your melancholy," the hunter said, "I can relieve your mind." Thereupon he caught her under his mantle, wished himself at the granite-mountains, and the next instant they were both sitting there. The costliest gems glittered all round them, and they gathered up some of the most precious. But the witch with her magic had made the hunter's eyes heavy and weary. He suggested to his companion that they should sit down and rest a little.

"I am so tired," he said, "I am ready to drop." And he laid his head in the girl's lap and fell asleep. When he was in a sound slumber she unfastened the mantle from his shoulders, put it over her own, and shovelling up her diamonds, rubies, and pearls, wished herself at home.

When the hunter had had his sleep out and awoke, he saw the trick his lady-love had paid him, and that he was alone and deserted on the strange mountains. "Oh!" he exclaimed, "how much deceit there is in the world!" and he sat there in great distress and wretchedness, sick at heart and not knowing what to do next.

The mountain he was on belonged to monstrous giants who lived there and carried on their avocations, and he hadn't been long awake before he saw them striding towards him. He lay down again and shammed being in a deep sleep.

The first giant stumbled on him with his foot, and exclaimed, "Here's a miserable earth-worm lying here inside out!"

"Trample on it," said the second.

But the third said contemptuously, "It's not worth the trouble. Let him be, he can't stay where he is, and if he climbs higher to the top of the mountain the clouds will carry him away."

Then they went on, and the hunter marked what they had said, and when they were out of sight he stood up and climbed to the top. He sat there a few minutes and then a cloud floated near: he caught hold of it, and

after being wafted about in the sky was dropped into a garden of herbs. It was surrounded by walls, and he alighted gently amongst the cabbages and cauliflowers.

The hunter looked round him, and said, "I haven't had much to eat lately, and I am hungry ; but here is no sign of apples and pears, or fruit of any sort. Nothing but vegetables and herbs." At last necessity drove him to appease his hunger with a salad. "Though not very appetising," he reflected, "it will at least refresh me." So he chose a fine lettuce, ate some of it, and at once experienced an extraordinary sensation. He felt himself changing utterly. He developed four legs, a thick head, and two long ears. To his horror he saw he was now an ass ; but his hunger remained unabated, and in his present condition he found salad most palatable, and devoured it with increasing greed. Then he grazed on another vegetable, and discovered that he was changing again back into his human shape. After that he lay down and slept off his weariness.

The next morning he took a specimen of both salads. "These," he said to himself, "shall help me to recover my property and punish the unfaithful." So with the bundle of salad in his pocket he climbed the wall, and went to search for the castle in which his lady-love lived. He found it after two days' wandering. He quickly stained his face brown so that his mother would not have recognised him, and went up to the castle asking to be taken in. "I am so exhausted," he said, "I cannot go another step."

The witch queried, "What is your business, my good fellow ? Who are you ?"

"I am one of the king's scouts," he answered, "and I have been sent out to find the most costly salad under the sun. I am thankful to say I have been successful, and have it with me, but the sun rays are so powerful, I fear they will fade the delicate herb, and I shall not be able to take it much further."

At the very mention of a choice salad the old witch's mouth watered, and she said, "My dear fellow-countryman, let me taste this wonderful salad."

"Why not?" he said. "I have brought away two

bunches, and can easily give you one," and he handed her the dangerous kind.

The witch suspected nothing, and took it into the kitchen to prepare it herself. When it was ready she couldn't wait till it was on the table, but took a leaf or two and put it in her mouth. Directly she swallowed it she lost her human form, and ran away across the yard a she-ass.

Then the servant girl came into the kitchen, and seeing the salad was ready took it to carry upstairs, but, from old habit, tasted it on the way, and became a she-ass likewise, and ran after the other into the yard.

Meanwhile the hunter sat waiting with the pretty girl for the salad, but as no one brought it, she said, "I wonder where the salad is."

The hunter thought, "The herb is beginning to act by this time," and then said aloud, "I will go down to the kitchen and inquire for it."

When he got down there he saw the two she-asses rambling about in the yard, and the salad on the floor.

"That's right," he said, "two of them have their deserts, now for the third!" He picked up the remaining leaves, laid them on the dish, and took them up to the girl.

"I am bringing you the delicacy myself," he explained, "so that you shall not have to wait any longer."

She ate some of it, and like the others was at once deprived of her human form, and ran into the yard a she-ass.

Afterwards the hunter washed his face, so that the transformed ones should recognise him, and going into the yard, said, "Now you shall pay the penalty of your falseness." So he bound them together with a rope and drove them along till they came to a mill. He tapped on the window-pane, and the miller put out his head and asked what was his business.

"I have three stubborn animals," he answered, "that I can't keep any longer. If you take them off my hands and give them board and lodging I will pay you well."

"All right," said the miller, "but what shall I do with them?"

Then the hunter told him to give the eldest ass (which was the witch) three beatings a day and only one meal ; the second ass (the servant girl), one beating and three meals, and the youngest (his former sweetheart) no beating and three meals, for he could not harden his heart enough to allow the girl to be beaten. After this he returned to the castle and found there all he wanted.

In a few days the miller came and informed him that the old ass who had been given three beatings and only one meal a day, was dead. "The two others," he went on, "are still alive and get three meals, but they are so depressed and sad, I don't think they can last much longer."

The hunter was touched at this, allowed his anger to evaporate, and told the miller to drive them back to him. When they came he gave them the other bunch of salad to eat, so that they should become human beings again.

Then the pretty girl fell at his feet, and said, "Alas, my love, my mother forced me to do wrong. Pardon me, for I did it against my will then. I love you dearly. Your wishing-mantle hangs in a cupboard over there, and for the bird's heart I will take an emetic."

This quite pacified him, and he said, "Keep them both, for it is all the same thing. I intend to make you my wife."

And so they married, and lived happily together till they died.

THE OLD WOMAN OF THE WOODS

A POOR servant girl was driving with her master's family through a great forest, and when they were in the middle of it robbers jumped out of the thicket and murdered every one they could lay hands on. The whole party perished except the poor girl, who in her terror had leaped out of the carriage and hidden herself behind a tree.

When the robbers had departed with their booty she came out of her hiding-place and saw what a dreadful catastrophe there had been. She began to cry bitterly, and said, "What shall I, a poor girl, do now ? I don't know

my way out of the forest. Not a soul lives in it, and I shall certainly starve."

She wandered about looking for a path, but could not find one.

When evening came she sat down under a tree, said her prayers, and would gladly have stayed where she was, no matter what might happen. But after a little while a white dove flew down to her with a little golden key in its beak. The dove dropped the key into her hand, and said—

"Do you see that large tree? In it there is a lock. Open it with the key, and inside you will find plenty of food, so that you need not starve."

She went to the tree, unlocked it, and in it she found a basin of milk and some white bread with which she could satisfy her hunger. When she had finished, she said to herself, "Now it is time for the hens to roost; I am so tired; I wish I could go to bed too."

Then the dove flew down again, bringing another golden key in its beak, and said, "Open that tree, and there you will find a bed."

She opened it, and found a beautiful soft bed. She prayed to the dear God that He would take care of her through the night; then she lay down and slept.

In the morning the dove came a third time, brought another key, and said, "Open yonder tree, and there you will find clothes."

When she opened it she found dresses ornamented with gold and precious stones, more magnificent than any belonging to a king's daughter.

She lived in this way for a long time; the dove came every day and supplied all her needs. She wanted for nothing, leading a good, quiet life.

But one day the dove asked, "Will you do something for me?"

"With all my heart," answered the girl.

"Then," said the dove, "I will lead you to a cottage, walk in, and you will find an old woman sitting by the hearth who will wish you good-day. But on no account answer her, whatever she may say, but go to the door on her right hand, open it, and you will find yourself in a room, where

a quantity of rings of all sorts will be lying on a table, amongst which are to be found magnificent ones with sparkling stones. Do not touch these, but look for a plain one which is also there, and bring it to me as quickly as you can."

The girl went to the cottage and walked in. There sat the old woman, who opened her eyes wide when she saw her, and said, "Good-day, my child."

The girl did not answer her, but went towards the door.

"Where are you going?" said the old woman, and she seized her by the cloak. "No one may go in there without my leave."

But the girl was still silent; she opened the door and went straight in. There lay on the table the great quantity of rings, which glittered and dazzled her eyes. She looked round, searching for the plain ring, but she could not find it.

Whilst she was thus searching she saw the old woman slink in with a bird-cage in her hand, and she went up and took it away from her. Inside was a bird holding the right ring in its beak. She caught hold of the ring and ran out of the house with it in great glee. She expected the white dove would come and fetch it, but it did not come. So she leaned against a tree to wait for the dove, when suddenly she felt the tree bend, and become soft and flexible. And the branches embraced her, and turned into two arms, and when she looked round the tree was a handsome man, who kissed her, and said joyously—

"You have delivered me from the spell of the old woman of the woods, who is a wicked witch. She changed me into a tree, and every day for a few hours I was a white dove, and so long as the ring was in her possession I could not recover my human figure."

His servants and horses, who had been changed into trees too, were also released from the spell, and now gathered round him.

He took the girl back with him to his kingdom, for he was a rich prince, and they married and lived happily ever after.

THE THREE BROTHERS

Once upon a time there lived a man who had three sons and nothing in the way of fortune except the house they dwelt in. When the father died each son would have liked to have the house to himself, but as the man loved them all three equally he did not know which to leave it to; neither did he wish to sell the house, because it had belonged to his forefathers, otherwise he would have got rid of it and divided the money between them. Then at last an idea occurred to him, and he said to his sons, "Go out into the world, all three of you, and learn a trade, and when you come back the one who can produce the most perfect masterpiece shall have the house."

The sons were content with the proposal, and the eldest resolved to be a blacksmith, the second a barber, and the third a fencing-master.

Then they fixed the date of their return and set out. As it happened, each came across an excellent master, who taught his trade to perfection. The smith shoed the king's horses and thought, "You will certainly be the winner of the prize and get the house." The barber shaved no one but aristocrats and thought he was certain of the house too. The fencing-master got several gashes in the face, but didn't mind, for he reflected, "If I am afraid of a cut I shall never get the house."

When the period agreed on for their absence was up they all came home to their father together. They were not sure how they could best display their prowess, and held a consultation. Just then a hare came along at full speed across the fields.

"Aye," cried the barber, "it comes in the nick of time." He took his basin, mixed his soap till it foamed, and as the hare was passing he shaved it clean while it ran without cutting it.

"That is very clever," said the father, "and will be hard to beat. I think you will get the house."

In a few minutes a carriage bowled up and the smith exclaimed, "Now, father, you shall see what I can do," and he ran after the carriage, seized the horse, and

wrenching off its four shoes put on four new ones without stopping the carriage.

"You are a wonderful fellow," said his father, "and have performed a feat as marvellous as your brother's. I really can't say now who will deserve the house."

Then the third son exclaimed, "Father, look at me and see what I can do."

It began to rain and he drew his sword and flourished it over his head, making thrusts and counter-thrusts in the air, so that the rain didn't touch him. It rained harder, and yet so skilfully and rapidly did he parry the drops that he remained perfectly dry, even when the heavens discharged bucketsful. He might have been under shelter all the time.

The father exclaimed in amazement and admiration, "Yours is the most astounding feat of all. A masterpiece of consummate skill. The house is yours."

The two other brothers acknowledged the justice of his decision, and as they were an affectionate family they all three stayed at home and practised their respective trades happily, earning a great deal of money.

They lived thus to a ripe old age, and then when one was taken ill and died the other two mourned and grieved for him so much that they died too, and people, knowing how fond they had been of each other, buried them in one grave.

THE DEVIL AND HIS GRANDMOTHER

THERE was once a great war, and the king, who had many soldiers, gave them so little pay that they had not enough to live on. So three of them consulted together and decided to mutiny.

One of them said, "If we are caught we shall be hung on the gallows. What shall we do?"

Another one said, "Do you see that large cornfield yonder? If we hide ourselves there no one will find us; the army is not allowed to go in there and will be marching to-morrow."

So they crept in amongst the corn, but the army did

not move away the next day, but remained encamped in the neighbourhood of the field.

They lay for two days and nights in the corn, suffering such hunger that they nearly died, and they knew that if they came out they would be caught and hanged.

"What was the good of our escaping if we are to die here in misery?" they said.

Just then a fiery dragon came flying through the air; it swooped down upon them and asked them why they had hidden themselves.

"We are three soldiers, and have mutinied because our pay was so small," they answered. "If we stay here we shall be starved to death, and if we come out they will hang us on the gallows."

"If you will serve me seven years," said the dragon, "I will lead you through the midst of the army, and no one shall see you."

"We have no choice and must agree," they answered.

Then the dragon seized them in his claws, carried them away through the air high above the army, and brought them down to earth again many miles away; but the dragon proved to be none other than the devil himself!

He gave them a small whip and said, "Slash and crack with this, and as much money as you want will spring up out of the ground. You can live like lords and keep horses and carriages, but at the end of seven years you will be mine."

Then he handed them a book in which they were all to sign their names.

"But," said he, "I will also ask you a riddle, and if you can guess it I will let you go free, and you shall no longer be in my power."

Then the dragon flew away and the three soldiers started on their travels.

They took the whip with them, and it brought them money in abundance.

They wore grand clothes and journeyed all over the world. Wherever they went they lived in great splendour; they drove their carriages, ate and drank sumptuously, but they did no wrong.

The time passed quickly, and as the seven years drew

to a close, two of them began to get terribly nervous and frightened, but the third put on a bold face and said, "Brothers, don't be afraid. I am not a fool and shall soon guess the riddle."

Then they went out and sat down in the fields, two of them with sorrowful expressions. As they sat there an old woman passed by and asked them why they were looking so sad.

"What is the good of asking? You can't help us," said one of them.

"Who knows?" she answered. "Only tell me what is the matter."

So they told her how that for nearly seven years they had been in the service of the devil, receiving money from him in such quantities that it might have been as plentiful as hay, and how in return they were to give themselves up to him if, at the end of seven years, they could not guess a certain riddle.

The old woman said, "If you want help, one of you must walk through the wood until you reach some fallen rocks resembling an old cottage; you must walk in, and there you will find help."

The two melancholy soldiers did not stir, thinking the old woman's advice was no good; but the more cheerful one jumped up and, hastening into the woods, soon found the cottage made of rocks. Inside sat an aged woman. This was the devil's grandmother, and she asked him where he came from and what he wanted.

When he had told her all that had happened she felt sorry for him and said she would help him. She raised a large stone which lay over the cellar and said, "Hide yourself down there and listen to all that is spoken, but mind you sit still and don't make a noise. When the dragon comes I will ask him about the riddle; he will tell me everything and you must listen to his answer."

At midnight the dragon flew in and called for his supper. The grandmother laid the cloth, brought in food, and they ate and drank together. In the course of the conversation she asked him how he had passed the day and how many souls he had gained.

"I should not have been pleased with my day's work,"

he answered, "had I not obtained three soldiers. I feel quite sure of them."

"Ah, three soldiers!" she said. "But they have something in their favour and might evade you yet."

Then the devil answered scornfully, "They are mine, for their only chance of escape is to give me the answer of a riddle which they cannot possibly guess."

"What is the riddle?" she asked.

"I will tell you. In the great North Sea lies a dead sea-cat that shall be their roast meat, the ribs of a crocodile shall be their silver spoons, and an old hollow trunk shall be their wine-glass."

When the devil had gone to bed the old grandmother raised the stone and let the soldier out.

"Did you listen carefully?" she asked.

"Yes," said he, "I know enough to enable me to guess it."

Then he quietly escaped through a window and hastened back to his companions. He told them how the old grandmother had outwitted the devil and how he had found out the answer to the riddle.

They were both much delighted and in such good spirits that they began slashing the whip, making so much money that the ground all around was covered with it.

At the end of the seven years the devil came with his book, pointed out their signatures and said, "I shall take you back with me to hell, there you shall frizzle; but if you can tell me what you will have for roast meat then I will set you free and you may keep the whip."

Then the first soldier began, "In the great North Sea lies a dead sea-cat, that will be our roast meat."

The devil looked annoyed and said to the second soldier, "H'm, h'm! and what will your spoon be?"

"The ribs of a crocodile shall be our silver spoon."

The devil pulled a long face, grunted h'm, h'm, h'm, and said to the third, "And do you know what your wine-glass will be?"

"Our wine-glass will be an old tree trunk."

Then the devil flew away with a furious yell, for he had lost his power over them.

The three soldiers kept the whip, made as much money as they wanted, and lived happily ever after.

FERDINAND THE FAITHFUL AND FERDINAND THE UNFAITHFUL

Once upon a time there lived a man and woman who so long as they were well off had no children, but when they lost their money and became poor a child was born to them. It was difficult, owing to their poverty, to find any one in the neighbourhood willing to stand godfather to the child. At last the father said he would go to the next village and see if he could find some one there.

On the road he met a poor man, who asked him where he was going to. When he told him he was searching for some one to be godfather to his child the poor man said, "As we are both poor, you and I, I will be the child's godfather, but remember I am too poor even to give a present. If you don't mind that, go and ask the mother to bring her child to the church."

When they arrived at the church the beggar was already there. He wished the child to be named Ferdinand the Faithful, and so it received the name.

As they came out of church the beggar said, "Now I will leave you, for I have nothing to give you, and you cannot afford to give me anything."

Then he turned to the mother and handed her a key, which he said she was to take great care of till the boy was fourteen years old. On his fourteenth birthday he was to go to the moor, where he would find a castle which the key would open.

The child grew up a sturdy, strong boy. On his seventh birthday he was playing games with his schoolfellows, and afterwards they began to talk about their respective godfathers and to boast of the presents they had given them. The little boy was silent, for he had never heard that he had had any presents from his godfather to boast of.

He went home and asked, "Father, did my godfather ever give me anything?"

"Yes," replied his father, "you have got a key that fits the door of a castle on the moor. If you see it you may open it and go in, for the castle belongs to you."

The boy went at once to look for the castle, but could not find it.

After seven years, when he was fourteen years old, he went to look for it again. This time he saw the castle, opened the door, and went in. But he found nothing inside except a grey horse. He was delighted, jumped on its back, and rode home to his father.

He felt very proud of possessing a horse, and said, "Now I shall be able to go long distances and see things." He started at once, and almost the first thing he saw was a quill pen lying on the ground. He was thinking of picking it up when it occurred to him he might as well leave it, as a pen was an easy thing to get at any time.

He had spurred on his horse when a voice behind him called, "Ferdinand the Faithful, please take me with you."

Looking back, he could see no one, but he picked up the quill.

After he had ridden on a little he came to a river, and on the bank saw a fish struggling in the mire, trying with all its might to get back into the water. "My dear fish," he said, "allow me to help you into the water," and he took him by the tail and threw him in.

The fish rose to the surface and said, "You have been so kind as to rescue me from the mire. I will reward you. Take this whistle, and whenever you are in need blow on it, and I will come to your aid."

He then rode on and met a man, who inquired where he was riding to.

"To the next village," he answered.

"What is your name?" was the next question.

"Ferdinand the Faithful," he replied.

"Indeed! Then you and I have almost exactly the same name, for mine is Ferdinand the Unfaithful."

They travelled together to the next village.

Ferdinand the Unfaithful knew a great many tricks. He could read the thoughts of others and foretell their actions, and he took a dislike to Ferdinand the Faithful.

They put up at an inn and met there a pretty girl, who fell in love with Ferdinand the Faithful, for he was very handsome.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I am simply travelling about," he replied.

The girl persuaded him not to leave. She told him the king of the country was advertising for an equerry or outrider, and he ought to apply for the place, but he expressed himself shy of offering his services.

The girl then declared she would apply for him. She went straight to the king and told him she knew of an excellent servant. The king seemed willing to engage him and asked her to send him to the castle.

Ferdinand the Faithful, however, was unwilling to be parted from his grey horse, so he preferred to be the king's outrider and not his valet.

When Ferdinand the Unfaithful heard this he said to the girl, "Why did you help that fellow and not do me a good turn?"

The girl was wise and knew he might prove a dangerous enemy, so to keep friendly with him she said, "I would do the same for you;" and later she went to the castle and asked the king to take Ferdinand the Unfaithful as his valet.

The king consented, and every time the new valet dressed his royal master he heard him lamenting over the loss of his lady-love.

Now as Ferdinand the Unfaithful disliked Ferdinand the Faithful he suggested one morning that the king should send his outrider to find the lady, and if he did not succeed to have him beheaded. So the king ordered his outrider to start on the quest, and instructed him to come home with the fair one or die.

Ferdinand the Faithful was greatly distressed. He visited his grey horse in the stable and told him of the task imposed upon him. "What shall I do, my dear gee-gee? What shall I do? How unhappy I am!"

He then heard a voice call, "Ferdinand the Faithful, don't cry."

He looked round and saw no one but the grey horse. "Oh, my darling grey horse," he exclaimed, "I shall have to part from you, for I must surely die."

Again the same voice said, "Ferdinand the Faithful, don't cry."

Then he understood that it was his grey horse speaking to him, and he said, "My darling horse, canst thou really talk?" and he then related the story of his being bound to search for the king's lady-love, and if he couldn't find her to die.

The grey horse said, "Go at once and tell the king you will go, but first you must have a shipful of meat and bread, for there are giants in the lake who will tear your limbs asunder if you don't feed them, and gigantic birds will peck out your eyes unless you give them bread crumbs."

The king ordered the butcher to kill oxen and sheep, and the baker to bake enough bread to fill the ship.

When the ship was loaded the grey horse said to Ferdinand, "Get on my back and take me with you, and when the giants approach the ship say—

"Gently, dear giants,
Of you I have thought,
A ship-load I've brought.

"And when the birds wheel around the ship say—

"Still, dear birdies,
Of you I've thought,
And a ship-load I've brought.

"Then feed them and they will not hurt you, but will be glad to help you in your undertaking. They will show you the castle where the princess lies sleeping, but remember you mustn't wake her. The giants will carry her off, bed and all."

Everything turned out as the horse had foretold. The giants and the birds were pacified and won over by being fed, and the giants took up the princess, bed and all, and carried her to the king.

The king was charmed to have her, but he said there were some papers they ought to have brought from the castle too, and he could not live without them.

Ferdinand the Faithful was told to go and fetch these papers, and if he didn't bring them to die. He went to the stables and consulted his grey horse. "Oh, my

dearest steed," he said, "they want to send me off on another journey."

"Well," the grey horse replied, "all you've got to do is to behave exactly as you did before."

So he loaded the ship with meat and bread and started, and everything happened as it had on the first journey.

On nearing the castle the grey horse said, "Go to the princess's bedroom and you will find the papers on the table." He went and fetched them, but on the way home he dropped the quill in the water.

"Alas," said the faithful grey, "now I can help you no longer."

But Ferdinand remembered his whistle. He blew on it and at once the fish came to the surface, holding the quill in its mouth. He took the papers to the castle and the king and princess were married.

The queen didn't like the king at all, because he had such a long nose, and she much preferred Ferdinand the Faithful.

One day at a grand banquet given to the whole court the queen said she knew some very good tricks. She could, for instance, cut off people's heads and stick them on again. Would not some one let her try? Naturally nobody was very keen on coming forward. Ferdinand the Unfaithful suggested that the other Ferdinand should volunteer. So the queen cut off his head, but stuck it swiftly on again, and no one would ever have known it had been cut off, except from a red line round his throat like a delicate thread.

The king was greatly amazed. "Where did you learn to perform miracles, my child?" he asked.

"Let me try it on you," she said.

"Very well," answered the king. So she cut off his head, but pretended it wouldn't fit on again. So the king was buried and the queen married Ferdinand the Faithful.

He never rode on any horse but his dear grey, who one day directed him to go to a common and gallop round it three times. This he did, and the grey suddenly stood on its hind legs and changed into a handsome prince.

THE IRON STOVE

In the days when people used to get what they wished for, a king's son met an old witch in a wood, and she enchanted the young prince with her herbs and potions, and made him sit in a great iron stove! There he stopped for many years, for no one could set him free; but one day a princess who had lost her way, and could not get back to her father's land, came to the stove and heard a voice from within calling, "Who art thou, and whence dost thou come?" And she answered "I have lost my way, and can't get back to my father's land."

"I'll soon help you," rejoined a voice from the stove, "if you will do as I tell you. My father is a greater king than yours, and I am willing to marry you."

This frightened the princess, who cried out, "What am I to do with an iron stove?" But she consented all the same. Then the prince told her to come back, when she had been home, with a knife to cut open the stove; and he told her how to go, so that she got to her father's palace in two hours. Then the old king and all around him were very glad; but the princess was sorrowful, and told her father how she had promised to marry the iron stove.

The king was so alarmed on hearing this that he fell down fainting. When he came to himself they determined that the miller's daughter, a very pretty maiden, should go instead of the princess. So she was sent to the place; a knife was given to her; and she was told to scrape a hole in the stove. She scraped and scraped in vain; and at last the voice from the stove said—

"I think it is daylight."

"Yes," she replied, "and I think so too; and I think I hear the clapping of my father's mill."

"Then you are the miller's daughter?" said the voice. "So you may go home and send the princess to me."

The girl returned, and told the king what the stove said; and they were more frightened than ever. Now, in the king's service was a swineherd's daughter, prettier than the miller's daughter; and to her the king gave a piece of

gold to go to the stove instead of the princess. So she went; but this girl, too, scraped and scraped without producing any impression on the stove; and at last the voice came from the stove saying—

"I think it is daylight."

"Yes," said she; "for I hear my father's horn."

"Then you are the swineherd's daughter?" said the voice. "Go and tell the princess if she does not come to me, all her father's kingdom shall fall into ruin."

When the princess heard this she began to weep; but the promise must be kept. So she bade her father farewell, took a knife, and set out for the wood. She came to the stove, and began scraping the iron; and in two hours' time she had made a small hole. Through this she looked; and inside the stove sat a handsome prince, richly dressed; and she fell in love with him at first sight. When she had scraped a hole large enough for the prince to get through, he stepped out and said—

"You are mine, and I am yours; you are my bride because you set me free."

Then he wanted to take her away with him at once; but at her request consented that she should first take leave of her father, on condition that she spoke only three words to him.

So the princess went home; but unfortunately she spoke far more than three words; and the iron stove vanished, being carried off over many icy mountains and snowy valleys; but the prince was no longer shut up in it. In time the princess said farewell to her father, and went back into the wood, but could find the iron stove nowhere. For nine days she wandered about seeking for it, and at last became so hungry that she thought she should die. When evening came she climbed up a tree; and when midnight was near she saw a light a little way off, and went towards it, in hopes to find help. Soon she came to a little hut, with much grass growing around it, and a little heap of wood before the door. Peeping through the window she saw a number of fat toads inside, and a table spread out with meat and wine; and the plates and dishes were of silver. She ventured to knock, and one of the creatures croaked out—

"Hearken, little crook-legged toad,
Ope the door of our abode,
And see who stands there knocking."

And a little toad came running to open the door ; and the princess went in.

They all welcomed her, and bade her be seated, and asked her whence she came, and whither she was bound. She told them how the stove and prince had disappeared because she spoke more than three words, and how she was seeking him through the world. Then the toad cried out—

"Little crook-legged toad appear,
See the basket hanging near,
Take it down and bring it here."

So the little toad brought the basket, and the old toad gave the princess her supper, and showed her a comfortable bed, on which she slept soundly. And at daybreak, when she rose, the old toad gave her three sharp needles and a plough-wheel and three nuts, which would be useful to her on her journey : for she would travel past the Glass Mountain, and three sharp swords, and a big lake, before she could see her lover again. So the princess set out ; and when she came to the glass mountain she set the three needles in the heel of her shoe, and so passed over. Then she put the needles in a safe place ; and when she came to the sharp swords she rolled over them on the plough-wheel.

At last she came to the lake ; and when she had passed that she saw a large handsome castle. Here it was that the prince dwelt, but he thought she was dead, and so he was going to marry another lady. She offered herself as a servant in the castle ; and one evening feeling in her pocket, she found three nuts the old toad had given her. She cracked one of them, and found inside a beautiful dress ; and when the new bride heard of this, she declared she must have the dress for herself, for that it was not fit for a servant. The princess refused to sell it, unless on condition that she was allowed to pass a night in the ante-chamber of the prince. This was granted ; but before the prince retired to rest the bride gave him a glass of wine, in which was a sleeping draught. So he could not hear when the

poor princess said, "I saved you out of the wild forest, and out of the stove; and I have come over a glass mountain, and three sharp swords, and a wide lake to see you—and you will not hear me."

The servants, however, heard her complaint, and told the prince. The next evening she cracked the second nut, and found a handsomer dress than the first; and the bride insisted on having it. The same condition was demanded and granted; but the bride gave the prince another sleeping draught, so that he could not hear the princess's complaints. But the servants heard her crying, and told the prince.

The same evening she cracked the third nut, and found a dress all spangled with golden stars; and the bride declared she must have it, and granted the former conditions. But this time the prince poured away the sleeping draught, and when the princess began to remind him how she rescued him out of the wood and stove, he heard her, and started up, exclaimed, "You are right, you are mine, and I am yours." Then he got into the carriage with the princess; and when they came to the lake they rowed quickly across; and they passed over the three sharp swords by means of the plough-wheel, and crossed over the glass mountain by the help of the three needles; and so they came at last to the toads' hut, which was changed into a great castle as soon as they entered. The toads, too, were all disenchanted, and resumed their natural shapes; for they were the sons of the king of that country.

And the wedding was celebrated, and the prince and princess stayed in the castle, which was finer than her father's. But the old king pined for his daughter; so they went and dwelt with him, uniting the government of the two countries; and they reigned for many years in happiness and splendour.

THE IDLE SPINNING WOMAN

In a village there once lived a man and his wife, and the wife was so lazy that she always tried to shirk her work. What her husband gave her to spin she either didn't spin

at all, or, if she spun it, left it unreeled on the shuttle. When he scolded her she would pout and say, "How can I reel, when I haven't a reel? Go into the forest and get me one."

"If that's your excuse," said the man, "I'll go certainly and fetch wood to make you a reel."

Then the woman became alarmed, for if the wood was got a reel would be forthcoming, and the thread wound, leaving space for her to spin more. So after a little reflection she followed her husband secretly into the forest. While he was up a tree selecting a suitable branch to cut off, she hid in the underwood and called out—

"Who reel-wood hews will die,
And she who reels will sigh."

The man put down his axe and listened. "Aye," he muttered to himself, "you've fancied it. Don't be afraid, you didn't really hear it." So he seized the axe again, and was beginning to chop, when again the voice from below spoke the same words. He paused, grew nervous, and meditated on the strange occurrence. But once more his courage revived, and he took hold of the axe a third time, but the voice called—

"Who reel-wood hews will die,
And she who reels will sigh."

He made up his mind that he wouldn't hew wood that day, and came down from the tree in great haste and started home.

The woman ran off by a short cut and reached the house before him. "Well," she said, innocently, as if nothing had happened, "have you brought a good bit of reel-wood?"

"No," he said. "I see it won't do to interfere," and he told her of the mysterious voice and its warning, and after that he gave up scolding her for some time.

But he began again when the untidiness of the house tried his patience to excess. "Wife," said he, "it is a disgrace that the spun flax should stay on the shuttle."

"Do you know I have a plan," she answered. "As you

won't get me a reel, you can place yourself on the floor, and I'll use you as one."

The man agreed, and in this way they managed to disentangle the yarn. "Now," he said, "it must be boiled."

Again the woman was alarmed, and thought of a new trick. "Yes," she said, "to-morrow early we will cook it."

The next morning she rose betimes, lit a fire, and placed the kettle on it, but instead of the yarn she put in it a lump of oakum. Then she went up to her husband, who was still in bed, and said, "I have to go out for a minute. Just watch the yarn, which is on the fire. You must be very careful, for if when the cock crows you are not looking at it the yarn will turn into oakum."

The man, eager to do his duty, got up, dressed, and went into the kitchen. But on coming to the fire and looking into the kettle, he saw nothing there but a lump of oakum. The poor man thought it was his fault, and that by some means or other he had not done what he had been told.

In future he made no allusion to either yarn or spinning. But you must allow his wife was a caution.

THE FOUR ACCOMPLISHED BROTHERS

THERE was a poor man who had four sons. When they were grown up he said to them, "Dear children, I must now leave the world. I have nothing to give you. Prepare to go into strange lands, learn a trade, and see that you make your way."

So the four brothers took up their walking staves, bade their father farewell, and went out at the gate together. When they had travelled some time they came to a cross way leading in four different directions. The eldest then said, "Here we must separate, but this day four years we will meet on this spot, and in the meantime seek our fortunes."

Each went his own way then, and the eldest met a man who asked him where he was going and what he meant to do.

"I want to learn a trade," he answered.

So the man said, "Come with me and be a thief."

"No," answered he, "that is not to be reckoned an honest trade, and the end of the story is that one comes to swing for it!"

"Oh," said the man, "you need not be afraid of the gallows. I would only teach you how to get hold of what no one else can procure, and by which you cannot be traced."

So he let himself be persuaded, became a proficient thief under the man, and was so skilled that nothing which he happened to want was safe from him.

The second brother met a man who put the same question to him, What on earth did he wish to learn?

"I do not yet know," answered he.

"Then come with me and be a star-gazer; there is nothing better than that, nothing remains hid from one."

He consented to this, and became such a skilful star-gazer that his master, when he had learnt all that could be taught him and wanted to proceed further, gave him a telescope, saying, "With this you can see what is passing on earth and in the sky, and nothing can remain a mystery to you."

A huntsman took the third brother to teach, and instructed him so well in all that belonged to the chase that he became a most practised hunter. His master gave him a rifle on his departure, and said, "With this you will not fail to hit whatever you aim at."

The youngest brother likewise met a man, who accosted him, asking him what he intended doing.

"Would you not like to be a tailor?" he asked.

"If I did not know," said the youth, "that sitting cross-legged from morning till evening, the drawing in and out of the needles, and the smoothing-iron, would not suit me at all."

"Ah, indeed," replied the man, "that's your idea of it; but with me you will learn quite a different kind of tailoring, which is agreeable and pleasant, and in every way quite honourable."

So he was persuaded, and went off with the man and learnt his trade thoroughly. On his departure the tailor gave him a needle saying, "With this you can sew together whatever is before you, whether it be as soft as an egg or

hard as steel, and it will become entirely one piece, with not a stitch to be seen."

When the four years agreed upon were over, the four brothers met at the same time at the cross-ways, kissed and embraced each other, and returned home to their father. "Now," said he, very much pleased, "has the wind blown you back to me again?"

They related what had happened to them, and how each had learnt his trade. They were sitting just in front of the house under a large tree, and the father said, "Now I will put you to the test and see what you can do." Thereupon he looked up and said to the second son, "Right up in the top of this tree there is a chaffinch's nest; tell me how many eggs are lying in it."

The star-gazer took his telescope, looked up above, and said, "There are five."

The father said to the eldest, "You fetch the eggs down without disturbing the bird that is sitting on them and brooding."

The accomplished thief climbed up and took the five eggs from under the body of the little bird, which sat on quietly without noticing anything, and he brought them down to the father.

The father took them and laid one on each corner of the table, with the fifth in the middle, and said to the hunter, "You shoot the five eggs in half for me with one shot."

The hunter aimed his rifle, and shot the eggs as the father had directed—all five of them, and at one shot. Of course he had the gunpowder that can be shot in different places.

"Now it is your turn," said the father to his fourth son; "you sew up the eggs together again, and the young birds that are inside as well, and in such a way that the shot shall not do them harm."

The tailor fetched his needle and sewed as his father had required of him.

When he had finished, the thief had to carry the eggs back to the nest in the tree and lay them under the bird without its noticing anything.

The little creature hatched them all, and a couple of days later the young ones came out, and each had a little

red stripe round the neck where they had been sewn together by the tailor.

"Yes," said the old man to his sons, "I have indeed good cause to praise you ; you have made good use of your time, and learnt something honest. I cannot say to which of you preference is due. When you have occasion to make use of your crafts, then it will be proved."

Not long after there was an alarm raised through the country that the king's daughter had been carried off by a dragon. The king lamented over this calamity day and night, and let it be known that whoever brought her back should have her for his wife.

The four brothers said amongst themselves, "Here is an opportunity for us to prove our worth," and wanted to start out together to deliver the princess.

"I shall soon know where she is," said the star-gazer, and looking through his telescope he said, "I see her already ; she is sitting on a rock in the sea, far away from here, but the dragon is stationed near, guarding her."

So he went to the king and begged for a ship for himself and his brothers, and sailed with them over the sea till they came to the rock. The princess was sitting there, but the dragon lay on her lap sleeping.

The hunter said, "I dare not shoot, I should kill the beautiful maiden at the same time."

"Then I will try my luck," said the thief, and crept up to them, and stole her away from under the dragon, but so gently and dexterously that the monster noticed nothing, and went on snoring.

They hastened joyfully back to the ship with her and steered into the open sea ; but the dragon, who on awakening had found the princess gone, came after them, snorting furiously through the air. When he hovered right over the ship and was preparing to swoop down, the hunter took aim with his rifle, and shot him through the heart. The monster fell down dead, but was so big and powerful that he destroyed the whole ship in his downfall. Fortunately they were able to secure a couple of rafters, and swam about on the open sea. They would have been in great distress, but the tailor—never idle—took his wonderful needle, sewed the boards hastily together with a couple

of big stitches, planted himself on them, and rowed about to the right and to the left, collecting all the pieces of the ship. Then he sewed the bits together so skilfully that the ship was soon ready for use again, and they could sail home happily.

There was great happiness when the king set eyes on his daughter once more. He said to the four brothers, "One of you shall have her for his wife, but you must arrange among yourselves which it is to be."

A sharp dispute then arose between them. The star-gazer said, "If I had not seen the princess all your arts would have been in vain; therefore she is mine."

The thief said, "What good would the discovery have been if I had not fetched her away from under the dragon? Therefore she is mine."

The hunter said, "You would, however, have been torn to pieces by the monster if he had not been struck by my bullet; therefore she is mine."

The tailor said, "And if I had not patched the ship together again with my needle you would all have been miserably drowned; therefore she is mine."

The king then announced to them, "Each of you has an equal right, but as you cannot all have the princess none of you shall have her; instead, I will give each half a kingdom for a reward."

This decision pleased the brothers, and they said, "It is better thus than that we should disagree."

So each received half a kingdom, and they lived with their father in all happiness for as long as it pleased Providence.

ONE-EYE, TWO-EYES, AND THREE-EYES

There was a woman who had three daughters, of whom the eldest was called One-eye, because she had only one eye in the middle of her forehead; and the next one Two-eyes, because she had two eyes like other people; and the youngest Three-eyes, because she had three eyes, and the third was likewise in her case in the middle of her forehead. But because Two-eyes did not look any different

from other human beings, her mother and sisters could not bear her. They said to her, "You, with your two eyes, are no better than the common folk, you do not belong to us." They pushed her about and threw her old clothes, and gave her nothing to eat but the scraps left over, and made her suffer in every way they could.

It happened that Two-eyes had to go out into the field to tend the goat, but was very hungry, because her sisters had given her so little to eat. So she sat down on a ridge and began to weep, and wept so much that two little streams flowed from her eyes. And once when she looked up in her distress, a woman stood by her who asked, "Two-eyes, why do you weep?"

Two-eyes answered, "Why should I not cry? Just because I have two eyes like other people, my sisters and my mother cannot bear me, push me about from one corner to another, throw dish clouts at me, and only give me the scraps left over to eat. To-day they have given me so little that I am still quite hungry."

The wise lady replied, "Little Two-eyes dry your face, I will tell you something, and that is you need not feel hungry any more. Just say to your goat—

"'Bleat, little kid,
Little table, be spread.'

and there will appear a freshly-laid table with delicious food on it, of which you may eat as much as you like. And when you are satisfied and do not require the table any longer, just say—

"'Bleat, little kid,
Little table, away,'

then it will disappear before your eyes." With that the wise woman went away.

But Two-eyes thought, "I must try at once and see if what she says is true, for I am so hungry," and said—

"Bleat, little kid,
Little table, be spread,"

and hardly had the words been spoken before a table

stood there covered with a little white cloth, and on it a plate with a knife and fork and a silver spoon and the most delicious eatables spread round, smoking and still hot as though they had just come from the kitchen. Then Two-eyes said the shortest grace she knew, "The Lord make us truly thankful. Amen," and set to and ate heartily. And when she had had enough she repeated what the wise woman had taught her—

"Bleat, little kid,
Little table, away."

The little table and everything on it at once disappeared. "That is a nice sort of house-keeping," thought Two-eyes, and was quite happy and cheerful.

In the evening when she came home with her goat, she found a little earthern bowl of food that the sisters had placed for her, but she did not touch it. The next day she went out again with her goat and left the few crusts set aside for her. The first and second time the sisters noticed nothing, but when it happened every time they remarked upon it and said, "Something must be wrong with Two-eyes, she leaves her food untouched every time, and yet she used to eat up all that was provided for her; she must have found some by other means." In order to arrive at the truth of the matter One-eye was to accompany Two-eyes when she drove the goat out to the pasture, and was to keep a look-out on her movements and see whether any one brought her food and drink.

When Two-eyes was ready to start, One-eye stepped up to her and said, "I will go with you into the field and see that the goat is well tended and brought to a place where there is enough fodder."

But Two-eyes perceived what One-eye meant to do, and drove the goat out into long grass, saying, "Come, One-eye, we will sit down together, I want to sing you something." One-eye sat down and was tired from the unaccustomed walk and the heat of the sun, and Two-eyes sang over and over again—

"One-eye, are you waking?
One-eye, are you sleeping?"

And then One-eye shut her eye and went to sleep. When Two-eyes saw that One-eye slept soundly and could not discover anything, she said—

"Bleat, little kid,
Little table, be spread,"

and seating herself at her table she ate and drank till she was satisfied. Then she cried again—

"Bleat, little kid,
Little table, away,"

and everything disappeared immediately. Two-eyes now awoke One-eye and said, "One-eye, you try to keep watch but fall asleep over it, while the goat might stray all over the place; come, we will go home."

Then they went home and Two-eyes again left her little dish untouched, and One-eye could not inform her mother why she would not eat, and gave as an excuse, "I fell asleep out of doors."

The next day the mother said to Three-eyes, "This time you must go and watch whether Two-eyes eats out of doors, and whether any one brings her food and drink, for she must eat and drink secretly."

So Three-eyes stepped up to Two-eyes and said, "I will go with you, too, and see whether the goat is well tended and given enough fodder."

But Two-eyes saw through Three-eyes' motives, and drove the goat out into long grass, and said, "We will sit down over there, Three-eyes, I want to sing you something." Three-eyes sat down, tired with the walk and the heat of the sun, and Two-eyes sang over again the same little song—

"Three-eyes, are you waking?"

But instead of singing as she ought—

"Three-eyes, are you sleeping?"

she sang from carelessness—

"Two-eyes are you sleeping?"

and continued—

"Three-eyes, are you waking?
Two-eyes, are you sleeping?"

Three-eyes then shut two of her eyes and slept, but the third, to which the little rhyme was not addressed, did not sleep. Three-eyes did indeed shut it, but only out of cunning, as though it too was asleep; but it blinked and could see everything quite well. And as Two-eyes imagined Three-eyes to be fast asleep, she said her little verse—

"Bleat, little kid,
Little table, be spread,"

then ate and drank to her heart's content, and afterwards bade the table begone—

"Bleat, little kid,
Little table, away."

But Three-eyes had seen everything.

Two-eyes came up to her and awoke her, saying, "Ah, Three-eyes, have you been asleep? You can watch well! Come, we will go home."

And when they got home, Two-eyes again ate nothing, and Three-eyes said to the mother, "I know now why the conceited creature does not eat: when she says to the goat out of doors—

"'Bleat, little kid,
Little table, be spread,'

a table stands before her covered with delicious food much better than we have, and when she has had enough, she says—

"'Bleat, little kid,
Little table, away,'

and everything disappears again; I saw it all exactly. She sent two of my eyes to sleep with a little rhyme, but the one in my forehead fortunately kept awake."

Then the envious mother cried, "Do you want to fare better than we do? You shall wish in vain for the future!" She fetched a butcher's knife, and stuck it into the goat's heart, so that she fell down dead.

When Two-eyes saw that, she went out full of sorrow, sat down on the ridge in the field and shed bitter tears.

At once the wise woman appeared again beside her and said, "Little Two-eyes, why do you weep?"

"Have I not good reason to cry?" she answered. "The goat that had my little table spread so nicely every day, whenever I repeated your little verse, has been killed by my mother; now I must again suffer hunger and thirst."

The wise woman said, "Two-eyes, I will give you some good advice. Ask your sisters to give you the dead goat's entrails, and bury them in the ground in front of the house door, and it will bring you luck."

With that she disappeared, and Two-eyes went home and said to the sisters, "Dear sisters, give me just something from my goat, I do not ask for anything good, only give me the entrails."

Then they laughed and said, "You may have that, if that is all you want."

And Two-eyes took the entrails and buried them in the evening, when all was quiet, in front of the door, according to the wise woman's advice.

The next morning, when they all awoke and went out of the front door, there stood a wonderfully fine tree with leaves of silver and fruit of gold hanging between them, and there could certainly have been nothing more beautiful or costlier in the world. But they did not know how the tree had come there in the night, only Two-eyes noticed that it had grown out of the piece of the goat, for the tree stood exactly on the spot where she had buried it.

The mother said to One-eye, "Climb up, my child, and break the fruit off the tree for us."

One-eye climbed up, but whenever she tried to take hold of one of the golden apples the branch slipped out of her hand; and this happened every time, so that she could not break off a single apple, try in whatever position she would.

Then the mother said, "Three-eyes, you climb up; you

can look round you better with your three eyes than One-eye."

One-eye scrambled down and Three-eyes climbed up, but Three-eyes was no more skilful, and strive as she might the golden apples swung back.

At last the mother became impatient and climbed up herself, but could take hold of the fruit no better than One-eye and Three-eyes, and always caught at the empty air.

Two-eyes then said, "I will go up, perhaps I shall fare better."

The sisters called out, "You, with your two eyes; what can you do?"

But Two-eyes climbed up, and the golden apples did not draw back from her, but it was just as though they came towards her hands, so that she could pick off one after the other and brought down a whole apron full. The mother took them from her, and instead of treating poor Two-eyes any better, the mother and One-eye and Three-eyes were so jealous, that she alone could pick the fruit, that her lot was even harder than before.

It happened once that as they were standing together by the tree a young knight came by.

"Quick, Two-eyes," called the two sisters, "crouch down that we need not be put to shame by you," and hastily they threw an empty barrel over poor Two-eyes that stood just by the tree, and thrust the golden apples she had been picking under it as well.

When the knight drew nearer, he turned out to be a handsome lord, and admired the splendid tree of gold and silver, and said to both the sisters, "To whom does this beautiful tree belong? Whoever will give me a branch of it may ask what he likes for it."

One-eye and Three-eyes replied that the tree belonged to them, and they much wanted to break him off a bough. They each tried very hard but could not do it, for the branches and fruit swung away from them at every effort.

Then said the knight, "That is indeed curious, that the tree should belong to you and yet you have not the power to break off anything from it."

They persisted that the tree was their property; but while they were speaking thus Two-eyes let a couple of

golden apples roll out from under the barrel, so that they ran along to the feet of the knight, for Two-eyes was angry at One-eye and Three-eyes not speaking the truth. When the knight saw the apples he was astonished, and asked where they came from. One-eye and Three-eyes answered they had another sister, but she did not let herself be seen, because she had only two eyes like any ordinary person. But the knight wanted to see her, and cried, "Two-eyes, come forward."

Thus encouraged, Two-eyes came out from under the barrel, and the knight was astonished at her great beauty and said, "You, Two-eyes, can doubtless break me off a branch from the tree."

"Yes," replied Two-eyes, "that I can well do, for the tree belongs to me," and climbing up, with little trouble she broke off a branch with its silver leaves and golden fruit, and handed it to the knight.

He then said, "Two-eyes, what shall I give you for it?"

"Ah!" answered Two-eyes, "I suffer hunger and thirst, sorrow and want from early morn till late at night; if you would take me with you and deliver me, I should be happy."

The knight then lifted Two-eyes on to his horse and brought her home to his paternal castle. There he gave her beautiful clothes, food and drink to her heart's content, and because he was so fond of her, he was betrothed to her, and the wedding was held with great rejoicings.

When Two-eyes had thus been taken away by the handsome knight, the two sisters greatly envied her her good fortune. "Yet we still have the wonderful tree," they thought, "even if we cannot break off any fruit from it, every one will stop before it and come to us and spread the fame of it; who knows what we may reap!" But by the next morning the tree had disappeared and their hopes with it; and when Two-eyes looked out of her little room, she saw to her joy that it stood outside and so had followed her there.

Two-eyes lived happily for a long time. Once two poor women came to her at the castle begging for alms. When Two-eyes looked into their faces she recognised her two sisters, One-eye and Three-eyes, who had fallen

into such poverty that they were obliged to wander from door to door seeking their bread. However, Two-eyes bade them welcome and treated them well and cared for them, so that they both regretted from their hearts all the unkindness they had done to their sister in their youth.

THE PRETTY KATRINELJE AND PIF-PAF-POLTRIE

"Good morning, Father Hollenthe."

"The same to you, Pif-Paf-Poltrie."

"Can I have your daughter?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, if Mother Malcho (milk cow), Brother Hohenstolz, Sister Käsetrant, and the pretty Katrinelje give their consent."

"Where is Mother Malcho?"

"In the stable milking the cow."

"Good morning, Mother Malcho."

"The same to you, Pif-Paf-Poltrie."

"Can I have your daughter?"

"Oh, certainly, when Brother Hohenstolz, Sister Käsetrant, and pretty Katrinelje have no objection."

"Where is Brother Hohenstolz?"

"In the loft, chopping wood."

"Good morning, Brother Hohenstolz."

"Same to you, Pif-Paf-Poltrie."

"May I have your sister?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, when Father Hollenthe, Mother Malcho, Sister Käsetrant, and the pretty Katrinelje have no objection."

"Where is Sister Käsetrant?"

"She is in the garden cutting kraut."

"Good morning, Sister Käsetrant."

"Good morning, Pif-Paf-Poltrie."

"May I have your sister?"

"Oh, yes, if Father Hollenthe, Mother Malcho, Brother Hohenstolz, and pretty Katrinelje give their consent."

"Where is pretty Katrinelje?"

"In her room, counting her pfennigs."

"Good morning, pretty Katrinelje."

"Good morning, Pif-Paf-Poltrie."

"Will you be my sweetheart?"

"Oh, yes, if Father Hollenthe, Mother Malcho, Brother Hohenstolz, Sister Käsetrant like, it is all right."

"Pretty Katrinelje, what have you for a dowry?"

"Fourteen pfennigs in cash, three groschens owed me, half a pound of oats, a handful of bulbs, and a handful of beans. Isn't that a good dowry, eh, Pif-Paf-Poltrie? What's your trade? Are you a tailor?"

"Something much better."

"A cobbler?"

"Something much better."

"An undertaker?"

"Something much better."

"A miller?"

"Something much better."

"A broom-maker, perhaps?"

"Yes, I am a broom-maker. Isn't that a beautiful trade?"

THE FOX AND THE HORSE

Once a peasant had a faithful horse that had grown too old to work. His master now grudged him his food and said to him one morning, "You are no longer any use to me, but to show you I don't mean to act unjustly towards you, if you have still the strength to bring me a lion I will continue to keep you. So get out of my stable at once and try what you can do," and he drove the animal into the open field.

The poor horse felt very sad and dejected, and went in the direction of the wood to seek shelter from the weather.

Here the fox met him and asked, "Why are you hanging your head and wandering about in this aimless fashion?"

"Alas!" replied the horse, "avarice and loyalty can't dwell in one house. My master has forgotten the many services I have rendered him in years past, and because I

cannot plough any more he will give me no fodder and has driven me out of his stable."

"Without any consideration?" inquired the fox.

"Only the poor consolation of telling me that if I am strong enough to bring home a lion he will still keep me, but he knows perfectly well I can't possibly do it."

The fox then said, "I will help you out of your difficulty. Lie down, stretch yourself at full length, and pretend to be dead."

The horse did as the fox directed, and the fox went straight to the lion, whose lair was not far off. "Come," he said, "there is a horse lying dead outside, and you can have a good square meal off it if you like."

The lion accompanied the fox, and when they stood together beside the horse the fox said—

"After all, it won't be very comfortable for you to lunch here. Let me tie the dead animal to your tail and then you can drag him into your lair and devour him in privacy and peace."

The lion approved the scheme and stood quite still to have the horse fastened securely to his tail. But instead the fox tied the lion's legs together with the horse's tail, and did it so deftly and firmly that there was no undoing the knot. When he had finished his work, he tapped the horse on the shoulder and said, "Run, charger, run!" In an instant the horse sprang to his feet and bounded off, taking the lion, *nolens volens*, with him. The lion roared and bellowed, and frightened all the birds in the wood, but the horse let him roar and never paused till he had arrived at his master's door.

When the master saw the lion, he said the horse should stay with him and be well fed till the end of his days.

THE SHOES THAT WERE DANCED INTO HOLES

Once upon a time there was a king who had twelve daughters, each one more beautiful than the other. They slept together in a hall, where their beds stood close together in a row, and every night when they lay in them

the king locked and bolted the door. In the morning, when the door was unlocked, he saw their shoes had been danced into holes, and it was a mystery how this had happened. Then the king issued a proclamation to the effect that whoever could find out how the shoes were danced into holes in the night should have one of the twelve sisters for his wife and succeed to the throne after his death, but whoever undertook to solve the mystery and had not done so in three days and three nights should forfeit his life. Soon afterwards a prince announced his readiness to attempt the solution of the problem. He was courteously received, and in the evening led into a room adjoining the hall. The bed was made up there and he was to watch who went in and danced in the sleeping apartment of the twelve sisters. Unfortunately the prince's eyelids soon felt heavy, and he went off to sleep, and when he awoke in the morning it was clear that all twelve had been to a dance, for there were holes in all the shoes. The second and third night he fared no better, and his head was ruthlessly cut off. After that several more princes and noblemen came, and all met the same fate and lost their heads. Then it happened that a poor wounded soldier was passing through the town, and when an old woman asked him what he was doing there he replied in jest—

"I have half a mind to offer myself as a spy on the twelve princesses and see where they go to, to dance their shoes in holes every night, and then to become king for my trouble."

The old woman took him seriously and said, "It is not so difficult as you suppose; all you've got to do is not to drink the wine brought to you at night, and to sham being sound asleep." Thereupon she gave him a little cloak and said, "If you throw this over you, you will become invisible and can glide after the twelve maidens and see where they go."

The soldier on hearing this advice went in for the venture in good earnest and let himself be announced as a suitor. He was received with as much politeness as his predecessors and given royal raiment to put on. At bedtime he was led into the ante-chamber, and was getting

into bed when the eldest daughter brought him a goblet of wine. He didn't drink a drop of it, but let it all soak into a sponge he had tied under his chin. He then lay down and after a few minutes began to snore as if he were in a deep slumber.

The twelve princesses heard his snores, and the eldest said, "He too might have spared his trouble and his life." They then got up, opened wardrobes, drawers, and boxes, out of which they took lovely dresses, and they decked themselves out before their looking-glasses, and skipped gaily about, overjoyed at the prospect of their dance.

The youngest seemed slightly depressed and said, "I don't know why you are all in such high spirits. I, for my part, feel as if some misfortune were hanging over us."

"You absurd goose," said the eldest. "What is there to be afraid of? Don't you remember how many royal people have tried in vain to find out our secret? I have given the soldier a sleeping draught like I gave the others, and you may depend the lout won't wake."

When they were all ready to start, they looked at the soldier and saw that his eyes were shut and that he lay perfectly still, and so they imagined it was all right.

The eldest went to the head of her bed and knocked on it; immediately it sank through the floor, and they climbed down the opening one after the other, the eldest leading the way.

The soldier, who had watched their movements, now rose and flung on his cloak, and followed at the heels of the youngest. In the middle of the staircase he stepped on her dress, and she exclaimed in a great fright—

"Who is that? Some one caught hold of my dress."

"Don't be so silly," remonstrated the eldest. "You only caught on a hook." And they went on till they reached the bottom. There they stood under a magnificent avenue of trees, the leaves of which were gold and silver and all flashing and gleaming.

The soldier thought, "You had better take a leaf as a witness," and broke off a twig.

Then the tree cracked ominously, and the youngest sister called out, "Something is going to happen. Didn't you hear that noise?"

But the eldest again shut her up. "That was firing! Our princes are firing salutes to welcome us."

And now they came to an avenue where all the trees had leaves of diamonds, and the soldier broke off a twig, and there was another tremendous crack.

The youngest sister jumped for fear, but the eldest insisted that the noises were only salutes.

Next they came to a lake on which twelve yachts were at anchor, and on the deck of each was a charming young prince. They were waiting for the twelve princesses, and when they came they paired off together.

The soldier followed the youngest, and in a few minutes her cavalier remarked, "How is it the ship seems so much heavier to-night? It is all I can do to move it."

"It is because the weather is so hot," suggested the youngest princess. "I can hardly breathe."

On the other side of the lake stood a beautiful castle, brilliantly illuminated, and from it came the sound of music and trumpets. They landed and entered it together, and the couples danced, the soldier dancing invisibly, and whenever they stopped to refresh themselves with wine, he emptied the goblet just as they were lifting it to their lips.

This frightened the youngest princess, but, as usual, the eldest silenced her. So they danced on till three o'clock in the morning, and by that time all their shoes were in holes, and they were obliged to leave off.

When they reached the staircase again, the soldier slipped in front and went back to bed, and as the sisters, with lagging footsteps, tired and yawning, came into their apartment, he was already snoring as loudly as ever. They took off their lovely frocks, put them away, kicked their shoes under their beds, and lay down.

The next morning the soldier did not say anything, but watched the extraordinary spectacle the second and third nights. Everything happened just the same, and they danced and danced till their shoes were almost in two pieces.

The third time he took as evidence of what he had seen, a goblet, instead of a twig from the trees.

When the hour arrived when he was to go to the king

he put the three twigs and the goblet under his coat. The twelve girls stationed themselves behind the door to listen to what passed.

In answer to the king's question, "Where have my daughters danced their shoes into holes during the night?" he replied—

"In an underground castle, with twelve princes," and then he produced his evidence.

Thereupon the king ordered his daughters to come before him, and asked them whether the soldier spoke the truth, and they, seeing that they were found out and that it would be useless to deny anything, confessed.

Then the king said, "Which of my daughters will you choose for your wife?" and the soldier answered—

"As I am not so very young I'll have the eldest."

So their marriage was celebrated, and the soldier inherited the kingdom.

THE SIX SERVANTS

In the olden times there lived an old queen who was a sorceress and whose daughter was the loveliest girl under the sun. The old woman's only thought was how she could snare men to ruin, and when a suitor appeared, she would say no one except the man who could solve a certain problem should have her daughter. Many were dazzled by the fairness of the girl, and tried to perform the impossible task set them by the old sorceress, but always without success, and each had been obliged to kneel at her feet and have his head cut off.

A certain young prince then heard of the girl's far-famed beauty, and said to his father, "I beg you, let me go and win her."

"Never, never," answered the king. "If you go, you go to your certain death."

So the son took to his bed and was an invalid for seven years, and no doctor did him the least good.

When his father saw there was no hope of his getting better he said sorrowfully, "Go if you like and try your luck. I don't know what else to advise."

So the son got up alone from his couch, perfectly well, and set out in jocund spirits.

It happened that as he rode over a common he saw something on the ground in front like a great dark haycock. This, when he came nearer, proved to be the stomach of a man who was lying stretched out on the ground.

The fat fellow when he saw the horseman stood up and said, "If you want any one as a servant, take me."

The prince asked, "What could I do with such a clumsy attendant?"

"Oh," said the fat man, "that's nothing. If I like I can make myself a thousand times fatter."

"If that's the case," said the prince, "come with me, and I think you may serve my purpose."

So he went on, followed by the fat man. At a little distance he came to another lying stretched out on the grass with his ear pressed against the ground.

"What are you doing?" asked the prince.

"I am listening," answered the man.

"And what are you listening to, so attentively?"

"I am listening to all that is going on in the world. I have such keen hearing, nothing escapes me. I can even hear the grass grow."

"Well, I should like to know," said the prince, "what you hear going on at the court of the old queen with the beautiful daughter. Can you tell me?"

"Yes. I hear the swish of the sword that is being sharpened to cut off a suitor's head."

Then the king's son said, "You will be useful to me, so come along." So the three pursued their road.

Next a pair of feet was seen in the distance, and a bit of the legs could be seen also, but the rest was invisible. After walking a good way they came to the body and the head too.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the prince, "what a long Tom you are!"

"Yes," was the answer, "but when I stretch my limbs out properly I am three thousand times as long, and taller than the highest mountain on earth. If you'll engage me, I'll serve you well."

"Come along, then," replied the prince. "You may be

useful." So they all went on together and came to a man sitting by the roadside with his eyes bound up. The prince asked him if he had weak eyes and unable to bear the light.

"No, indeed," he answered. "I have such marvellously sharp sight that I am obliged to keep the bandage on, otherwise everything I looked at would dash to bits. If such a gift is of any service to you, take me with you."

"Come along," said the prince. "You may be useful."

They went on and next came across a man lying in the eye of the sun, shivering and shaking as if he were frozen. Not a limb of him was still.

"What makes you shiver?" asked the prince. "The sun is so hot."

"Ah," answered the man, "my nature is quite different from other people's. The warmer weather it is the colder I am and the more I shiver, and when it is cold I become hot. On ice I cannot breathe for heat, and in the middle of a furnace I am so cold I don't know what to do."

"You are a wonderful fellow certainly," said the prince. "If you would like to be my servant, come along."

They went on and came to a man with such a very long neck that he was standing peering round him over all the mountains.

"What are you looking at so intently?" asked the prince.

"I have such bright, keen eyes," he replied, "that I can see over woods and fields, mountains and valleys, to the very end of the world."

The prince then said, "Come with me. It would not do to pass by such a curiosity."

Now the prince arrived in the town where the old queen lived, with his six extraordinary servants. Without saying who he was, he told the queen if she gave him her lovely daughter he would fulfil any task she might impose on him.

The sorceress was delighted at another fine and gallant youth falling into her snare, and said, "I will make a threefold condition; fulfil it, and you shall be my daughter's lord and husband."

"What is the first part of it?" asked the prince.

"You are to bring me a ring that I have dropped into the bottom of the Red Sea."

The prince went home to his servants and said, "The

first thing to be done is not easy. A ring must be fished out of the Red Sea. How is it to be accomplished ?"

The man with the bright eyes said, "I'll look and see the spot it lies on." He looked and announced that he saw the ring hanging on a sharp stone.

The tall, lanky man said, "I could easily fetch it out if I could see it."

"If that's all," cried the fat man, "I can help." He stooped down and held his mouth open over the water. The waves broke into it as if it had been a cave, and so he drank up the whole sea and left it as dry as a meadow.

Then the long man stooped a little and picked up the ring with his hand.

The prince in high delight took the ring to the old sorceress.

She was naturally astounded and said, "Yes, that's the right ring, the first part of the condition you have accomplished ; but now comes the second. Do you see over there, grazing on the meadow in front of my castle, three hundred fat oxen ? These you are to devour, hair, horns, bones and all. And in the cellars below are three hundred casks of wine. These you must drink every drop of, otherwise I shall shed your blood and kill you."

"Mayn't I invite a guest to the banquet ?" asked the prince. "Without company no meal is very appetising."

The old woman laughed maliciously.

"You may invite one person," she said, "but only one."

The prince returned to his servants and said to the fat man, "You are to be my guest to-day and eat yourself full for once."

The fat man then unbelted himself and became a thousand times bigger. He had no trouble in putting away the three hundred oxen, and when he had swallowed the last bone asked if there was not another course. He then drank all the wine out of the casks, not leaving a drop hanging on the tap.

The old woman exclaimed, when she learnt that he had performed the second part of the condition, "So far no one else has done as much as you have ! But now comes the third point, and that is the hardest of all and will certainly cost you your head." Then she said, "This evening

I shall bring my daughter to your room and leave her there, and you may sit with your arms round her. But be careful that you keep awake. I shall come again at twelve, and if in the meantime she has vanished you are lost."

The prince thought, "This part of the condition sounds easy and pleasant. I shall not be likely to close my eyes." He nevertheless called his servants and confided in them what the old creature had said. "There is no knowing what cunning lies behind the proposal," he remarked. "One cannot be too careful. So keep watch and be careful that the maiden doesn't escape from my chamber."

At nightfall the sorceress brought her daughter and put her in the prince's arms; then the lanky one twisted him self in a circle round the pair, and the fat man stationed himself at the door so that no living soul should come in. There the two sat and the girl did not speak a single word, but the moonlight shone through the window and illuminated her exquisite face. He could do nothing but look at her beauty, full of joy and love, and no fatigue visited his eyes. This lasted till eleven o'clock, when the old queen cast a spell over them and they all fell asleep, and at that moment the girl was taken away. They slept on till a quarter to twelve, when the spell lost its power and they awoke.

"Oh, misery and misfortune," cried the prince. "Now I am lost indeed."

The faithful servants began to wring their hands, but the listener with the sharp hearing said, "All be quiet and let me listen."

So he listened for a moment, and then he reported. "She is sitting inside a rock three hundred hours' journey from here and laments her fate. You alone can help her, lanky one, two or three strides will take you there."

"Yes," answered the lanky man, "but the sharp-eyed man must come too to smash down the rocks."

So the lanky man picked up the man with the bandage over his eyes, and in a second, before you'd time to snap your fingers, they were standing by the enchanted rock. At once the lanky man removed the bandage from his companion's sharp eyes, and with one glance they shivered he rocks to atoms. The lanky man then took the maiden

up, carried her back in a jiffy, went again for his comrade, and just as twelve struck they were all in their places as they had been before the spell.

The old sorceress slunk in with a sneering smile, as much as to say, "Now he must be mine," for she thought her daughter hundreds of miles away inside the rock. But when she saw the girl in the prince's arms she was frightened and muttered, "Here's a man who can do greater wonders than I can."

There was nothing now to be done but to give her daughter to the prince. But she managed to whisper in her ear, "Shame on you to obey the behests of vulgar people, not to choose your own bridegroom of your own free will."

The maiden's proud soul now rose in revolt and she meditated revenge. She ordered the next morning three hundred faggots of wood to be collected and set alight, and said that although the threefold condition had been fulfilled she would not marry the prince till one of his party had sat in the midst of the burning faggots. She imagined not one of the servants would consent to burn for their master's sake, and that he out of love for her would get into the fire himself, and so she would be rid of him.

The servants said to one another, "We have all done something except the shivering fellow, and now it is his turn."

So they sent him into the furnace. It burnt for three days, and when the flames subsided there stood the shivering man among the ashes, shaking like an aspen-leaf, blue with cold.

"Such a frost," he said, "I have never experienced in all my life. If it had gone on much longer I should have been frozen to death."

Now there was no escape left; the beautiful girl was obliged to take the strange youth for her husband. But when he was leading her to the church the old queen said, "I cannot bear this disgrace," and she called out the military and sent them to the church to bring back her daughter.

The listener, however, had pricked up his ears and heard what the old woman was saying privately to her officers.

"What shall we do?" he said to the fat man.

The latter was ready with a plan, which was to pour out of his mouth a part of the Red Sea that he had swallowed, and this was enough to drown all the armed knights that came riding up to the church.

When the sorceress knew this she sent out large reinforcements, but these fared no better, for the sharp-eyed man took his off bandage and looked at them and they fell to bits like broken glass.

Now the ceremony proceeded without interruption, and when it was over the six servants took their leave at the church door.

"Your desires are now all fulfilled," they said to their master. "You have no further need of us, we will therefore travel on and seek our fortune."

Half an hour's walk from the prince's castle there was a village where a swine-herd was tending his pigs.

"Do you know what I really am?" the bridegroom asked his wife. "I am not a prince at all, but a swine-herd like that man over there, who is my father. You and I must go and help him now feed the pigs."

So he alighted with her at the inn and gave instructions that in the night her royal garments were to be taken away, and the landlady gave her a pair of coarse woollen stockings and an old petticoat to put on.

In the morning when she woke up she thought, "I have deserved all this because I have been so proud and haughty," and she quite believed her husband was a swine-herd and she went out with him to feed the pigs.

This sort of thing lasted eight days, and by the end of that time her feet were torn and sore, and she wondered how she could stand it much longer. Then some people came one day and asked her if she knew who her husband really was, and she said, "Yes, he is a swine-herd, and is just gone to drive a bargain in the town."

They then said, "Come with us and we will take you to him," and they led her up to the castle, and in the entrance hall her husband stood waiting to welcome her, attired in royal clothes.

At first she didn't recognise him, but he took her in his arms and kissed her and said, "I suffered for you so much, and now you have suffered a little for me."

Then the wedding was celebrated in good earnest, and he who told the story wished he had been present.

THE WHITE AND THE BLACK BIRDS

A WOMAN went with her daughter and step-daughter through a field to cut fodder. There the good God appeared as a poor man walking towards them and asked, "Which is the way to the village?"

"If you want to know," said the mother, "find it out for yourself," and the daughter added—

"If you are afraid of not finding it a sign-post will direct you;" but the step-daughter said—

"Poor man, I will guide you, come with me."

The good God was angered against the mother and daughter, and turning His back upon them pronounced a curse over them that they should become as black as night and as ugly as sin. But the good God was gracious to the step-daughter and walked with her, and when they drew near to the village He blessed her, saying, "Choose three things and I will grant them you."

The girl then said, "I would like to be as beautiful and pure as the sun."

Immediately she became as white and beautiful as the day.

"Then I would like to have a purse that never emptied."

That was given her also, but with the words, "Do not forget the best."

So she said then, "My third wish is for the Kingdom of Heaven after my death."

That was also promised her, after which the good God left her.

When the step-mother came home with her daughter and saw that they were both coal-black and ugly, but that the step-daughter was white and beautiful, the anger in their hearts arose and they thought of nothing but how they might do her harm.

Now the step-daughter had a brother called Reginald, of whom she was very fond, and told him all that had happened.

Reginald said to her one day, "Dear sister, I will paint your picture so that I can always have you before my eyes, for my love for you is so great I am always wanting to look at you."

She replied, "But do not let any one see the picture."

He now painted his sister for himself and hung the picture up in his room; he had his dwelling in the king's castle, where he was a coachman. Every day he stood before it and thanked God for the happiness of having his beloved sister bestowed on him.

Now the king whom he served had just lost his wife, who had been so beautiful no one could find any to resemble her, and the king was in deep grief over it. Meanwhile the courtiers saw how the coachman stood daily before the beautiful picture, and they envied it him and let the king know of it. The latter ordered the picture to be brought to him and saw that it was like his dead wife in every way, only still more beautiful, so that he fell deeply in love with it. He sent for the coachman and asked whom the picture represented. When the coachman said it was his sister the king resolved to take none but her for his wife, and giving him a carriage and horses and magnificent clothes of gold sent him away to fetch his chosen bride.

When Reginald came with the message his sister was very glad, but the black one was jealous over the other's good fortune, worked herself up into a fury and said to her mother, "Of what use are all your arts when you cannot procure me such happiness?"

The old woman said, "Keep quiet, I will soon manage it for you," and with her witch's arts she dimmed the coachman's eyes till he was half blind and stopped the ears of the white step-daughter till she was half deaf.

Then they stepped into the carriage, first the bride in the gorgeous royal robes, then the step-mother with her daughter, and Reginald sat on the box to drive. After a while the coachman called out on the way—

"Cover yourself up, little sister mine,
That the rain shall not wet you,
That dust shall not blow on you,
That you come to the king all fair and fine."

The bride asked, "What is my dear brother saying?"

"Oh," said the elder woman, "he said you must take off your golden dress and give it to your sister."

So she took it off, and the black sister put it on, giving her an old grey smock in exchange. They drove on farther.

After a little time the brother repeated—

"Cover yourself up, little sister mine,
That the rain shall not wet you,
That dust shall not blow on you,
And you come to the king all fair and fine."

The bride asked, "What does my dear brother say?"

"Oh," said the old woman, "he said you must take off your golden hood and give it to your sister."

So she took off the hood and put it on the black one, sitting herself with uncovered hair. Thus they continued their way.

Again the brother cried after a little while—

"Cover yourself up, little sister mine,
That rain may not wet you,
That dust may not blow on you,
And you come to the king all fair and fine.'

The bride asked, "What is my dear brother saying?"

"Oh," said the old woman, "he said you might just look out of the carriage."

But they were at that moment driving along a bridge over a deep piece of water. When the bride stood up and leant out of the carriage the other two pushed her out, so that she was thrown into the water. But just at the moment she sank a snow-white duck rose out of the face of the water and swam down the river. The brother had noticed nothing and drove the carriage on till they came to the court. Then he brought the black girl to the king as his sister, believing it really was she, because his eyes were dimmed and he saw the gold clothes shining.

When the king saw the extreme ugliness of his intended bride he became very wrathful and ordered the coachman to be thrown into a pit which was full of vipers and reptiles. But the old witch knew how to ensnare the

king and by her arts so to dazzle his eyes that he kept her and her daughter, and she even grew quite passable in his eyes and he actually married her.

One evening, while the black bride was sitting on the king's lap, a white duck swam up to the sink in the kitchen and said to the scullion—

"Youth, make up the fire,
For me to warm my feathers by."

The scullion did so, and lit a fire for her on the hearth; the duck came and settled close to it, shook herself, and plumed her feathers with her beak. While she sat thus arranging herself she asked, "What is my brother Reginald doing?"

The scullion answered—

"He lies imprisoned in the pit,
With vipers and all kinds of reptiles.'

She inquired further, "What is the black witch doing within?"

The scullion replied—

"She is sitting warm
Within the king's arm."

The duck said, "May God have mercy!" and swam away.

The next evening she came back and asked the same questions and again the third evening.

Then the scullion could stand it no longer, and going to the king related everything to him.

But the king wanted to see for himself, and went down the next evening, and when the duck stretched her head out of the sink he took his sword and cut her neck through, and immediately she turned into a lovely maiden just like the picture the brother had painted of her. The king was now full of joy, and because she stood there quite bare he sent for costly robes for her and had her dressed in them. Then she related to him how she had been betrayed by cunning and deceit and at last thrown into

the river, and her first request was that her brother might be fetched out of the snake-hole. And when the king had carried out this request he went into the room where the old witch sat and asked, "What does she deserve who acts in such and such a way?" and recounted the whole course of events.

However, she was blinded, and suspecting nothing, said, "She deserves to be stripped of her clothes and put into a barrel studded with nails, and a horse harnessed to the barrel and sent out into the world."

All this was done to her and her black daughter. The king married the beautiful white bride, and rewarded the faithful brother by making him a rich and influential man.

IRON HANS

THERE was once a king who had a large forest close to his castle in which game of all kinds was preserved. At one time he sent out a huntsman to shoot a deer, but he didn't come back.

"Perhaps he has met with an accident," said the king, and on the following day sent out two more huntsmen, and they, too, did not return.

On the third morning he summoned all his huntsmen, and said, "Search the whole world till you find my missing men."

But of all these not one returned, nor did any of the greyhounds they had taken with them. From that time no one dared enter the forest, and it lay wrapped in deep silence and mystery, and now and then a vulture or an eagle was seen flying over it.

This went on for years, till one day a strange huntsman sought an interview with the king and craved a licence to go into the forest.

"But," said the king, "what is the use? It will only fare with you as with others, and you will never be seen or heard of again."

"Sire," replied the huntsman, "I will go at my own risk. I have no fears."

The strange huntsman departed with his dog for the

forest. Before long the dog scented a deer, and was going to pursue it when he came to a deep pool, out of which a naked arm was stretched. It seized the dog and dragged him under the water. Then the stranger went back and fetched three men to clear out the pond with buckets. When they could see to the bottom they saw a wild, savage-looking man lying there, quite brown, and his body a mass of rusty iron. His beard and hair were down to his knees. They bound him with ropes and took him away to the castle. There was great astonishment at the extraordinary sight, and the king had an iron cage made for the wild man. It was placed in the yard, and every one was forbidden on pain of death to open the door of the cage, and the queen took care of the key herself.

From this time forward any one could with safety go into the forest.

The king had a son of eight years old, who was playing once in the yard, and by accident threw his gold ball into the cage.

The boy ran up to it and cried, "Throw me back my gold ball."

"Not before you have opened the door for me," he replied.

"No," said the boy. "I mustn't do that. My father, the king, has forbidden it;" and the child ran away.

The next morning he came again and demanded his ball.

The wild man answered, "Open my door;" but the boy wouldn't.

The third day the king had gone out hunting, and the boy came again and asked for his ball, saying, "Even if I wished I couldn't open the door. I haven't got the key."

Then the wild man said, "It is under your mother's pillow, and you can easily fetch it."

The boy, who was only bent on recovering his ball, cast all reflection to the winds and ran and fetched the key. The door was heavy, and as he opened it the boy grazed his fingers. As it swung back the wild man stepped out, gave him his gold ball, and strode off.

Now the boy was frightened and ran after him screaming, "Oh, wild man, don't go away, or I shall be punished."

The wild man turned round, lifted him on his shoulder, and went at a great pace back to the forest.

When the king came home he noticed the empty cage at once, and asked the queen how it happened, and she could give no explanation and went to look for the key, but found it gone. She then called her boy, and no answer came. The king sent out servants into the fields to look for him, but they could not find him. Then it was only too easy to guess what had happened, and there was great mourning and sorrow in the court.

When the wild man was in the dark wood again he took the boy off his shoulder, and said to him, "Father and mother you will never see again, but I will adopt you, and as you let me out of my prison I will be kind to you. I have enough gold and treasures to please any one—more, in fact, than any one else in the world."

He then made the boy a couch of moss, on which he fell asleep. The next morning he conducted him to a spring.

"Look," he said, "how bright and sparkling the water is, as clear as crystal. You must sit by it, and take care that nothing falls in, for if anything does, the water is desecrated. Every evening I shall come and see if you have obeyed me."

The boy seated himself on the edge of the spring, and saw constantly, a gold fish or gold snake gleam in the water. He took care that nothing fell in. Once, however, his finger pained him, so that he involuntarily dipped it in the water. He drew it quickly out again and saw it was quite gilded, and all the scrubbing in the world would not wash off the gold stain.

At evening Iron Hans came, looked hard at the boy, and asked, "What have you done to the spring?"

"Nothing! Nothing at all," answered the boy, and hid his fingers behind his back.

But the man said, "You dipped your finger in the water; this time it shall be overlooked, but remember not to drop anything more in."

Early the next morning he seated himself at the spring and kept guard by it. His finger pained him again and he drew it over his head, when one of his hairs fell into

the water. He quickly drew it out again but it was quite gold.

Iron Hans came back and knew, without being told, what had happened.

"You have let a hair fall in the water," he said. "I will once more excuse your disobedience, but if it happens a third time you will not be able to stay with me any longer."

Early on the third day the boy sat by the spring and determined to keep his hands still, however much his finger hurt. But the time went slowly, and for something to do he looked at the reflection of his face in the water. In this process he stooped lower and lower over the water, till his hair, which flowed over his shoulders, fell into the water. He stood up quickly, but every hair on his head was now gold and shone like the sun. He tied his pocket handkerchief over it in a great fright, hoping the man wouldn't notice it.

When he came, he said at once, "Untie that handkerchief."

Then the golden hair streamed out, and it was no good the boy trying to excuse himself.

"You have not stood the test and your staying here any longer is out of the question," said the man. "Go out into the world and learn what poverty is. But, because you have not a bad heart and I mean you no harm, I will grant you one thing. When you are in need, come direct into the forest and call, 'Iron Hans,' and I will come and help you. My power is great, greater than you think, and I have an abundance of gold and silver."

So the young prince left the forest and went over trodden and untrodden paths till he came to a great town. He looked out for work, but could find none, for he had learnt nothing that was of any use to him. At last he went to the castle and applied for a place there. The people at the court didn't know exactly what to give him to do, but took a fancy to his appearance and said they would keep him. The cook finally gave him wood to hew, water to draw, and ashes to sift.

Once it happened that there was no one else handy, and the cook sent him up with the soup to the royal table;

to hide his golden hair he put on his cap, and the king remarked—

"When you wait at the royal table you should not keep your hat on."

"Ah, sire," replied the boy, "I can't take off my cap because I have a bad disease in my head."

The king then sent for the cook, and scolded him for taking such a boy into his employ. He requested that he should at once be sent about his business. The cook, however, had compassion on him and changed him with the gardener's boy.

Now his work was in the garden. He had to plant and water, dig, and sow, in all weathers. One day in the summer, when he was working alone in the garden, it was so hot that he took off his cap to let the breeze play on his head. The sun caught his hair and made it flash like burnished gold.

Its brilliance was reflected on the window-panes of one of the princesses' bedrooms, and she started up to see what it could be. From the window she saw the boy and called out, "Boy, bring me a nosegay."

He put on his cap hastily, and tied up a bunch of wild flowers.

On the stairs he met the gardener, who said to him, "How can you take a royal child common wild flowers. Go quickly and, instead, pick a bunch of the choicest hothouse blooms."

"Oh, no," answered the boy. "Wild flowers have a stronger perfume, and she will like them better."

When he came into the princess's apartment, she said, "Take off your cap; it is not seemly to come here with your head covered."

He made the same excuse as he had to the king, but she would not accept it—caught hold of his cap and pulled it off. Down rolled his splendid golden locks over his neck and shoulders, and the princess was lost in admiration. He tried to run away, but she held him back and gave him a handful of ducats. He took them away with him, but gave them outside to the gardener, and said, "Here's a present for your children; they may like the coins to play with."

The next day the princess called him again, and on his entering the room grabbed at his cap, but he held it on firmly, with both hands. She gave him another handful of ducats; but as before, he didn't wish to keep them and handed them over to the gardener for his children. The third day it was the same thing; she tried to take off his cap, and he wouldn't keep her money.

Not long afterwards war broke out in the kingdom. The king assembled his people, and was doubtful whether with their help he could offer successful resistance to the enemy, who was a powerful one and had large armies.

The gardener's boy said, "I am now grown up, and I will go to the war if you will give me a horse."

The others laughed, and said, "When we are gone you may look for one in the stables."

So after they had departed, he went to the stable and took out the only horse they had left. It was lame in one foot and limped. He jumped on its back and rode in the direction of the dark forest. He arrived at the outskirts of it, reined in his horse, and called three times, "Iron Hans," so loud that the trees vibrated.

Immediately the wild man appeared, and said, "What do you want?"

"I want a sound, strong horse, for I am going to the war."

The wild man went back into the forest, and in a few minutes a groom came with a snorting charger, which was so spirited it was almost impossible to hold it. And behind was a detachment of soldiers in mailed armour, their drawn swords glittering in the sunshine. The youth handed his three-legged animal to the groom, mounted the other and rode off at the head of his company.

By the time he reached the battle-field the king's men were falling like ninepins, and it seemed likely the day would be lost. With his little armed force the youth changed the whole complexion of the fray. He burst on the field, charged the enemy, and mowed down every one who offered opposition. It ended in a complete rout of the enemy, and victory for the king. But instead of joining the king afterwards, he returned with his company to the edge of the forest, and called Iron Hans.

"What is it?" asked the wild man.

"I want you to take your charger, and give me back my three-legged animal," he said.

This was done, and he rode back to the castle on the lame horse.

When the king came home his daughter rushed to meet him and congratulate him on his victory.

"It was not I," he explained, "who won the victory; but an unknown knight, who came up unexpectedly with a troop in armour. Without his aid I should have been defeated."

His daughter was very curious to know who the strange knight could be. The king could throw no light on the mystery, for he said the knight had followed the enemy and he had seen no more of him.

The princess then inquired of the gardener about his boy.

He laughed, and said, "He has just come home from the war on his game-legged steed, amidst the jeers and scoffs of the villagers. They shouted, 'Here comes our old hop-and-go-one again!' and they asked him what hedge he lay under while the fight was progressing, and he answered, 'I did all for the best, and without me they would have been beaten;' but, of course, they only laughed at him worse than ever after that."

The king then said to his daughter, "I will organise a great banquet and feasting, which shall last three days. You shall throw a gold apple and perhaps it will be caught by the unknown."

When the festivities were announced, the boy went into the forest and called Iron Hans.

He came instantly.

"Well, what can I do for you?" he asked.

"I want to catch the princess's golden apple," he said.

"Done!" exclaimed Hans. "You shall have a suit of red armour and ride on a red fox."

On the day appointed the youth rode up, mingled with the other knights, and was recognised by no one. The princess came forward and threw a golden apple in their midst, but he alone caught it, and directly he had done so rode off. On the second day Iron Hans fitted him

out as a white knight and he rode a white mare. Once more he caught the apple, but did not linger, and was gone before any one could look round.

The king grew angry, and said, "This is not keeping the rule. He is bound to appear before me and to give his name."

And then he issued a command that the knight who had caught the two golden apples if he came a third time should be watched and followed, and if he showed resistance, those who followed him might thrust and lunge at him with their swords. The third day he received from Iron Hans a suit of coal black armour and a black horse; and again he caught the apple. He was going to gallop away when the king's men followed him, and one wounded him in the leg with the point of his sword. He escaped, but his horse reared so tremendously that his helmet fell off and his wonderful golden hair fell on his shoulders. The pursuers went back and reported this to the king.

The next day the princess asked the gardener after his boy.

"He is working in the garden. The poor clown has attended the *fêtes* and only came back last night, when he showed my children three golden apples he had won."

The king then asked him to come and see him, and he came into his presence with his cap on. But the princess went up to him and took it off, and the shiny, golden fleece flowed about his shoulders and filled every one with astonishment.

"Are you the knight," asked the king, "who has come three days following in a different colour and caught the three golden apples?"

"Yes," he answered. "And there are the apples," and he produced them from his pocket. "If you want further proof you may see the wound one of your servants inflicted on me when I was followed. And I am the knight, too, who helped you to defeat your enemy."

"If you can achieve such deeds as these you are no gardener's boy. Tell me, who are your parents?"

"My father is a powerful monarch; and I have as much money as I can possibly want."

"I see," said the king. "I am greatly in your debt. Can I grant you a favour?"

"Yes, you can certainly," was the reply. "Give me your daughter."

The princess laughed merrily, and said, "He doesn't stand on ceremony, does he? But never mind; I knew when I saw his beautiful golden hair that he was no ordinary gardener's boy;" and she came up and kissed him affectionately.

His father and mother came to his nuptials, and were overjoyed, for they had given up all hope of ever seeing their beloved son again. And as they all sat round the table at their wedding feast, the music suddenly ceased, the doors were swung back, and in walked a tall majestic king with a procession of courtiers.

He came straight to the youth, embraced him, and said, "I am Iron Hans, and was enchanted into a wild man of the woods, but you released me. All the treasure and riches I possess shall be your property now and for ever."

THE THREE SWARTHY PRINCESSES

OSTEND was besieged by the enemy, who offered to spare it for a sum of six hundred thalers. The citizens then agreed that whoever could raise the money should be made burgomaster.

There was a poor fisherman outside the town who made his living by going out to fish in the sea. The enemy took his son prisoner, and gave him in exchange six hundred thalers. The father went straight to the town and handed over the sum to the authorities, and the enemy retreated. He was then made burgomaster, and it was given out that any one who forgot to address the fisherman as "Master Burgomaster" should go to the gallows.

Meanwhile the son escaped from the enemy, and came into a huge wood that covered the side of a high mountain. He climbed up the steep path and reached at last a desolate big castle, where all the chairs, tables, and hangings were ebony black, and where lived three princesses,

who were so swarthy and dried up they were nearly black too. They told him they would not hurt him, and that he might prove their deliverer. He expressed himself as glad to be of any service to them, if he knew how. Then they told him that for a whole year they must not let him speak to them, or look at them, but that if there was anywhere he wanted to go to particularly now, they would send him. Then he said he should like above all things to visit his father; and they gave him a bag of money, and some clothes, in which he would reach his destination in eight days.

When he got to Ostend again he did not find his father in the fishing-hut, and when he asked what had become of the fisherman, he was told that if the citizens in the town heard he called him by that name he would have to hang on the gallows.

But he wouldn't heed, and was brought to the gallows. Then he said, "I pray you, gentlemen, to give me leave to return to the old fishing-hut."

But the burgesses took no notice of his petition.

Then he said, "What have I done? Am I not a poor fisherman's son, who gained for my father and mother a large sum of money?"

Then he was recognised, and his father took him back to his burgomaster's house, and he related all his adventures, and told of the great enchanted castle in which lived the three princesses who were nearly black all over, except for one white spot on their faces, and who had told him not to be afraid, but to deliver them from their spell.

His mother said, "That will lead to no good. I advise you to go back and take a holy-water kettle and spurt boiling water in their faces."

And when he went back he was so frightened at the sight of them asleep, that he dropped the water in their faces, and they became half white.

Then the three princesses sprang up, and said, "Cursed one! our blood shall cry out for vengeance. Now there is not, and never will be, a man in the world who can deliver us. We have three brothers lying in chains whom we were to have released."

There was then a great uproar in the castle, and he

jumped out of the window. A few minutes later the castle had sunk under the earth, and the mountain disappeared too, and no one could ever tell the spot on which it had stood.

KNOIST AND HIS THREE SONS

Between Werrel and Gorst there lived a man, and his name was Knoist. He had three sons. The first was lame, and the second was blind, and the third was naked. They once went out into the fields, and there they saw a hare ; and the blind one shot it, and the lame one caught it, and the naked one put it in his pocket. Then they came to a mighty big piece of water, on which there were three ships ; the first floated, and the second sank, and the third had no bottom to it. And they all embarked in the one that had no bottom, and then they came to a great big forest, where there was a great big tree, and in the tree there was a great big chapel, and in the chapel there was a withered old clerk, and a savage old priest, who were dealing out blessings with cudgels.

> And may we all have peace and repose,
> And be delivered from blessings like those.

A MAID OF BRAKAL

A maid of Brakal went once into St. Anne's chapel, under the Hinnan mountain, and as she wanted a husband badly, she prayed for one, thinking she was quite alone—

> "Oh holy St. Anne,
> Help me to a mate,
> You know the man.
> He lives near Guthmergate.
> Has yellow hair.
> You know him well."

The sacristan happened to be behind the altar, and heard her words. In a shrill, squeaky voice he answered, "You'll never get him ! You'll never get him !"

The maid thought it was the Mary-child speaking, that stood in the picture by St. Anne, and she said angrily, "Hold your noise, you naughty brat, and let your mother speak!"

A DIALOGUE OF COINCIDENCES

"WHERE are you going?"

"To Walpe."

"I'm going to Walpe. You're going to Walpe. Sam, Sam, we'll go together."

"Have you a husband? What's his name?"

"Cham."

"My husband's called Cham, and your husband's called Cham. I'm going to Walpe, you're going to Walpe. Sam, Sam, we'll go together."

"Have you got a child, too? What is your child's name?"

"Grind."

"My child is Grind; your child is Grind. My husband is Cham; your husband is Cham. I am going to Walpe; you are going to Walpe. Sam, Sam, we'll go together."

"Have you a servant? What's your servant's name?"

"Make-it-right."

"My servant is Make-it-right; your servant is Make-it-right. My child Grind; your child Grind. My husband Cham; your husband Cham. I am going to Walpe; you are going to Walpe. Sam, Sam, we will go together."

THE LITTLE LAMB AND THE LITTLE FISH

THERE once lived a little brother and a little sister who loved each other dearly. Their own mother was dead, and their step-mother was not kind to them, and did them all sorts of ill-turns.

One day it happened that they were playing in the meadow in front of the house with two other children. There was a pond on one side of the house, and the chil-

dren chased one another round it. Then they took hands and formed a circle, and sang—

"Enake Benake, let me live,
And I to you my bird will give.
Birdy shall fetch you straw,
The straw I'll give to my Cossack.
Cossack shall give me milk,
Milk I'll take to the baker.
Baker shall bake me a cake,
The cake I'll give to Kitty.
Kitty shall catch me mice,
Mice I'll put in my trap
And catch——"

The one to whom the last word fell broke loose and ran away, and the others had to try and catch him.

The step-mother looked out of the window and saw them frolicking about, and their light-hearted gambols annoyed her. She was a mistress of witchcraft, and so she changed the little brother into a fish, and the little girl into a lamb. The fish swam up and down the pond very sorrowfully, and the little lamb wandered about the meadow in great dejection of spirits, and refused to eat a single blade of grass.

A long time passed thus, and then some strange guests arrived at the castle. The wicked step-mother thought now is a good opportunity, and she called the cook. "Go into the meadow," she commanded, "and bring the lamb in to be killed, or we shall not have enough food for the guests."

The cook went and fetched the lamb, led it into the kitchen, bound its feet; and the lamb suffered it all patiently. When the cook drew out his knife, and was sharpening it outside the back door, he noticed a little fish swimming up and down excitedly, and looking up at him. It was the little brother, who had seen the cook lead off the lamb, and who had swum up as close to the house as it could, and was trying to attract attention.

The little lamb had seen it, and called down to it—

"Ah! dear brother in the pond below,
Indeed my heart is full of woe,
Now the cook is polishing the steel,
And I'm to be served up for a meal."

The little fish answered—

"Alas, little sister, up there,
My heart-ache is hard to bear,
Here down in the pond below."

And when the cook heard the little lamb speak such sorrowful words to the little fish he was alarmed, and thought to himself, "This can be no ordinary lamb, but must be somebody the evil mistress of the house has enchanted." And he said aloud, "Be calm, I will not slaughter you," and he killed another lamb, and cooked it for the guests. Then he took the other to a kind peasant woman, and told her all he had seen and heard.

It turned out that the peasant woman had been the children's nurse, and she had strong suspicions of what had happened. So she took the lambkin to a wise woman. The woman pronounced a blessing on the little fish and the little lamb, and they immediately recovered their human forms. Afterwards she led them away to a wood, where they lived happily with their old nurse in a nice little house.

OPEN, SESAME

There were once two brothers, one was rich and the other poor. The poor one got nothing from his brother, but made a scanty living by selling corn, and was often so badly off that he had not even enough bread for his wife and children.

One day as he was driving his cart through the wood he saw not far off a high, bleak mountain which he had never noticed before. He stopped and gazed at it in astonishment. As he stood there he saw twelve tall, fierce-looking men approaching, and thinking they might be robbers, he pushed his cart behind some bushes, and climbed into a tree to see what would happen. The twelve men came and stood in front of the mountain, and cried out, "Open, Sesame; open, Sesame."

Then the mountain flew open, and when the twelve had gone in, it closed again. In a short time it re-opened,

and the men came out, carrying heavy sacks on their shoulders.

As soon as they had all come out into the daylight, they cried, "Sesame, close; Sesame, close." Then the sides of the mountain came together so that no entrance was visible, and the twelve men went away. When they were out of sight, the poor man came down from the tree, and being curious to know what was hidden away so secretly in the mountain, he went and stood in front of it, and cried out, "Open, Sesame; open, Sesame." The mountain at once began to open, and he went inside. There he found a great cave full of silver and gold, and behind these lay great heaps of pearls and beautiful precious stones, piled up like corn.

The poor man wondered what he should do, and whether he dared help himself to some of the treasures. At last he filled his pockets with gold, but he did not touch the pearls and precious stones. When he got outside he cried, "Sesame, close; Sesame, close." Then the mountain closed, and he drove away in his cart.

Now he had no longer any need to worry. He bought bread and even wine for his wife and children; he lived happily and respectably, gave to the poor, and was kind to every one. When the money was all spent he borrowed his brother's scales and fetched some more, but he did not touch any of the jewels.

He went a third time, and again borrowed his brother's scales.

The rich brother had for some time been jealous of the other's good fortune, and of the beautiful establishment which he kept, and could not imagine where all the riches came from, and what the scales were wanted for. At last he thought of a plan: he covered the bottom of the scales with pitch, and when they were returned he found a piece of gold sticking to them.

He went to his brother and asked him what he had been measuring.

"Corn and grain," said the other.

Then the rich brother showed him the piece of gold, and threatened to bring him before the magistrates if he would not tell the truth.

So he told him all that had happened.

The rich man ordered his carriage, and drove quickly to the mountain. He meant to make good use of the opportunity, and bring back far more valuable treasures than his brother had done.

When he reached the mountain, he cried out, "Open, Sesame ; open, Sesame." The mountain opened, and he went in. There lay the treasures all round him, and for some time he could not decide which to take first, but at last he began to load himself with as many jewels as he could carry, and prepared to come away.

But he had been so taken up with thinking of his riches that he had forgotten the name of the mountain, and cried out, "Open, Semeli ; open, Semeli." But this was not the right name, and the mountain remained closed and did not even move. Then he grew frightened, and the longer he thought the more confused he became, and not even his treasure could help him now.

In the evening the mountain opened, and in came the twelve robbers. When they saw him they laughed, and one of them cried out, "Ah, my bird, we have caught you at last. Do you think we have not noticed that you have been here twice, although we could not catch you? But this time you shall not escape."

The rich man cried out, "It was not I, but my brother!" But it was in vain that he begged for his life, for they would not listen, and they cut off his head.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

There was once a prince who wanted to marry a princess, but it was to be a real princess. So he travelled about through all the world to find one of the right sort ; but everywhere he found something in the way. There were princesses enough, but whether they were real princesses or not he could not make out. There was always something about them that did not appear quite correct. So he came home, and was quite sorrowful, because he so much wanted to have a real princess.

One evening there was a dreadful storm. It thundered

and lightened, and the rain streamed down in a way that was frightful to behold. Then there was a knock at the town-gate, and the old king went down to open it.

There was a princess standing outside the gate. But, oh dear! how terribly wet she looked, out in the rain and the bad weather! The water was running down from her hair and clothes; it ran in at the toes of her shoes, and out again at the heels; and yet she declared that she was a real princess.

"Well, we shall soon see that," thought the old queen. She said nothing, however, but went into a bedroom, took all the mattresses off the bed, and put a pea into the bedstead; then she took twenty mattresses, and laid them upon the pea, and then twenty eider-down feather-beds on the top of the mattresses.

And on that bed the princess had to lie all night long. In the morning they asked her how she had slept.

"Oh, very badly indeed!" said the princess. "I could hardly close my eyes the whole night. Goodness knows what had got into the bed! I lay on something hard, that bruised and pressed me so that I am black and blue all over. It is quite horrible!"

Then they saw that this was a real princess, because she had felt the pea through the twenty mattresses and the twenty feather-beds of eider-down; and nobody but a real princess could be so sensitive.

So the prince took her for his wife, for he knew that he should now have a real princess; and the pea was put in the museum, where it is still, unless some one has stolen it.

And this, you see, is a true story.

THE LITTLE DONKEY

THERE once lived a king and queen who were very rich, and had everything they wanted excepting one thing, and that was a child. The queen lamented bitterly night and day that she had no child, and at last God fulfilled her wish, but when the child came into the world they found it did not look human, but was just like a donkey. When the mother saw it her tears and complaining began afresh.

She would rather have had no child at all than a donkey, and she told them to throw it into the water that the fishes might eat it.

But the king said, "No, as God has given him to us he shall be my son and heir, and after my death he shall sit on the royal throne and wear the royal crown."

So the little donkey was brought up, and his ears grew very long and straight. He was always merry, ran about and played, and was particularly fond of music. One day he went to a famous musician and said, "Teach me your art, so that I may be able to play the lute as well as you."

"But, my dear young sire," said the musician, "you would find it very difficult. Your fingers are too big and not suitable. I fear you would never manage it." But there was no way out of it, for the donkey insisted on learning; he was careful and diligent, and at last he learnt to play as well as the master himself.

One day the young prince was walking sorrowfully along, when he came to a well. He looked down, and saw in the clear water the reflection of his donkey-like figure. He felt so grieved about it that he wandered out into the wide world, only taking with him one faithful companion. They walked far, and at last they came to a kingdom where an old king reigned who had an only and most beautiful daughter.

The donkey said, "We will stop here," and he knocked at the gate and cried out, "There is a visitor outside, open the gates so that he can come in." But as no one came to open the gates he sat down, took his lute, and played most beautifully upon it with his fore-feet.

Then the porter came and opened his eyes wide in astonishment, and he ran in and said to the king, "Outside the gate there is a young donkey who is playing the lute as well as any accomplished master."

"Bring the musician in," said the king. But when the donkey came in they all began to laugh at the lute-player.

They wanted him to sit down with the servants at dinner, but this did not please him, and he said, "I am nobly born, and no common stable-donkey."

"If that is true sit down with the warriors," they answered.

"No," said he, "I will sit with the king."

The king laughed, and replied kindly, "Yes, donkey, it shall be as you wish; come and sit by me." Then he asked, "Donkey, how do you like my daughter?"

The donkey turned and looked at her, nodded, and said, "Exceedingly; I have never seen any one so beautiful."

"Very well, then, you shall sit next to her," answered the king.

"That will just please me," answered the donkey, and sat down by her, eating and drinking nicely, for he knew how to behave as well as any one. When the noble animal had been some time in the king's palace he thought, "This won't do; it is time that I went home." So he hung his head sadly, and went to the king to ask his permission to go.

But the king had grown fond of him, and said, "Donkey, what is the matter with you? You look as sour as vinegar; stay with me and I will give you whatever you want. Do you want gold?"

"No," replied the donkey, shaking his head.

"Precious stones and ornaments?"

"No."

"Would you like the half of my kingdom?"

"Oh! no."

Then said the king, "If I only knew what would make you happy! Would you like to marry my beautiful daughter?"

"Oh! yes, indeed I would," answered the donkey, and became quite cheerful and happy all at once, for this was exactly what he had wanted.

So a great and magnificent wedding was held.

In the evening the bride and bridegroom were taken to their room, where the king, wishing to know how the donkey would behave, had hidden one of his servants and told him to watch.

The bridegroom bolted the door and looked round to make sure they were alone; then he suddenly threw off his donkey's skin, and there stood a handsome and noble youth. "Now you see who I am, and that I am not unworthy of you," he said.

The bride was delighted, kissed him, and loved him better than ever.

In the morning he got up and put on his donkey-skin, and no one would have known that it concealed anything.

When the old king saw him he said, "Is the little donkey up already?" and to his daughter, "You are grieved, are you not, that your husband is not an ordinary human being?"

"Oh, no, dear father," she answered, "I love him as dearly as if he had been the most handsome of men, and shall do so all my life."

The king was much puzzled, until the servant whom he had hidden came and told him everything.

"It is impossible!" said the king.

"Well, watch yourself," answered the servant, "and you will see with your own eyes, and, my lord, why not take away the skin and burn it? Then he will have to show himself in his own form."

"Your advice is good," said the king.

In the night, when they were both asleep, he crept in, and on the bed he saw a most beautiful youth, and the donkey-skin lay discarded on the floor. He took it away, and had a huge fire built outside. On it he threw the skin, and stood and watched it until it was burnt to ashes.

As he wanted to see what the youth would do he sat up all night and waited.

At sunrise the prince got up and looked about for his donkey-skin, but it was nowhere to be seen. He was alarmed, and said sadly to himself, "Now I shall have to fly."

But when he got outside there stood the king, who said to him, "My son, where are you going in such haste, and what is the matter? Stay here, you are so handsome, you must not leave me. I will give you the half of my kingdom, and when I am dead you shall have the whole of it."

"Well, I hope we shall go on as happily as we have begun," said the prince. "I will certainly stay with you."

So he took possession of half the kingdom, and when the old king died at the end of a year he reigned over the whole. On the death of his own father he inherited his country as well, and he lived in great pomp and splendour.

THE UNGRATEFUL SON

One day a man was sitting with his wife before their door. They had before them a roast chicken, on which they were preparing to refresh themselves. Suddenly the man saw his old father coming towards him. Then he made haste to hide the chicken, so that he might not have to give any to the old man. As for the father, he only drank a draught and went away.

Immediately the son went to look for the dish to put it back on the table, but the roast chicken had changed into a great toad, which sprang at him, and fixed itself upon his shoulders for ever. When they tried to take it away, the horrid creature darted venomous glances at all who approached, as if it intended to throw itself upon them, so that no one dared come near it. The ungrateful son was condemned to feed it, for fear it should eat him up; and so he passed the rest of his days wandering miserably to and fro on the earth.

THE THREE IDLE SONS

A king had three sons whom he loved equally, and he did not know to which of them he should leave his kingdom after his death. When he was dying he called them to him and said, "I have an idea that I will tell you about. The laziest of you shall be my heir."

Then spoke the eldest, "Father, then the kingdom will be mine, for I am so lazy that when I lie down to sleep I cannot even trouble to shut my eyes, even if a drop of water falls into them."

The second one said, "Father, the kingdom is mine, for I am so lazy that when I sit down by the fire to warm I would sooner let my toes get burnt than move back my chair."

The third said, "Father, the kingdom is mine, for I am so lazy that were I to be hung and had the rope round my neck, and were some one to put a sharp knife into my

hand I would sooner let myself be hanged than that I would raise my hand to cut the rope."

When the king heard this he answered, "You have gone the furthest, and shall therefore inherit my kingdom."

THE TURNIP

THERE were once two brothers who were soldiers, one was rich and the other poor. The poor one, wanting to put an end to his poverty, left off his soldier's uniform and began to work like a peasant. He dug and raked his small piece of ground and planted turnip seeds.

Soon the seeds began to sprout, and there grew up one turnip that was so large and thick and which kept on growing at such a rate that it might have been called "the prince of turnips," for never had such a one been seen, and never will be again. At last it grew so enormous that it filled a whole cart, and needed two oxen to draw it. The peasant did not know what to do with it, and wondered whether it would bring him good or bad luck. He thought to himself, "If I sell it I shall not get much for it, and if I keep it to eat myself the little ones would do as well; the best thing I can do is to present it to the king."

So he put it into a cart, harnessed his two oxen, and drove to the palace, where he presented it to the king. "What a queer thing!" said the king; "I have seen many wonderful things, but never such a monstrosity. What sort of seed did it come from? or is it that you are one of Fortune's children?"

"Oh! no," said the peasant, "I am no child of fortune. I am but a poor soldier, and because I was so poverty-stricken I left off my red coat and took to ploughing the land. I have a brother who is rich and whom you know well, but I, because I am poor, am forgotten by all the world."

Then the king felt sorry for him and said, "You shall no longer suffer poverty, for I will give you so much that you shall be as prosperous as your brother." So he gave him much money, many acres of land, and many cattle,

and made him so rich that his brother's possessions were nothing compared to his.

When the latter heard what the other had earned by a single turnip he pondered how he, too, could meet with such good fortune. But he thought he would manage things much more cleverly, and he took gold and horses and gave them to the king, imagining that in return the king would give him a much larger present, for if his brother had received so much for one turnip what would not he deserve for such beautiful things?

The king accepted the present, and said he could think of nothing better and more uncommon to give him in return than the turnip.

So the rich man had to put his brother's turnip into a cart and drive away. When he got home he did not know on whom to vent his wrath, until an evil thought struck him, and he decided to kill his brother.

So he hired murderers, who were to hide themselves in a secret place, and then he went to his brother and said, "I have discovered a hidden treasure; let us go together and dig it out and divide it between ourselves." The other was quite willing, and went without any misgivings.

Before they had gone far, however, the murderers sprang out upon him, bound him with ropes, and meant to hang him on a tree. But just then came sounds of loud singing and horses galloping from a distance, and they grew frightened. They threw their prisoner into a sack, slung it to the branch of a tree, and fled. The man worked away until he had made a hole in the top of the sack through which he could put his head.

The singer proved to be a wandering student, a young fellow, who had been gaily singing a song as he wended his way through the forest.

When the man in the sack saw him he cried out, "My greetings to you!"

The student looked all round, but could not think where the voice came from. At last he sung out, "Who called me?"

Then answered the other from amongst the branches, "Look up; I am sitting here in the sack of wisdom. In a very short time I have learnt great things. Your schools

are nothing compared to this; soon I shall have learnt everything; then I shall come down and be wiser than any one else in the whole world. I understand about the stars, the signs of the heavens, the whistling of the wind, the sand of the sea, the healing of all sickness, and the uses of birds, herbs, and stones. If you were up here you would understand what wonders flow from the sack of wisdom."

When the student heard all this he was astonished, and said, "Blessed be the hour in which I have found you. Could not I, too, come into the sack?"

Then the other answered with feigned unwillingness, "I will let you in for a very short time, but you will have to wait an hour, for there is yet a little that I want to learn."

When the student had waited a short while the time began to drag, and he begged that he might be allowed to come in, for he said that his thirst for knowledge was so intense.

Then the man above pretended to yield, and said, "In order that I can get out of the house of wisdom you must let down the sack by the cord, and then you shall get in."

So the student let down the sack, opened it, and set him free. Then he cried, "Now draw me up quickly," and wanted to get into the sack standing upright.

"Stop!" said the other, "that is not the right way," seized him and pushed him into the sack head foremost, shut it up, and drew the seeker after wisdom up into the tree; then he left him swinging in the air, and called out, "How do you like it, my dear fellow? You see, you feel that wisdom is coming to you already, and you are making good progress. Sit there quietly until you grow more clever." Thereupon he mounted the student's horse and rode away, but he sent some one in an hour to let him down.

THE OLD MAN WHO WAS MADE YOUNG

When our Lord was on earth he went one evening with St. Peter to a blacksmith's, where he was hospitably received. Now it happened that a poor old beggar,

worn out with age and sickness, passed by and begged alms of the blacksmith.

St. Peter felt sorry for him and said, "Lord and Master, if thou wilt, cure him of his disease, that he may again work for his own living."

The Lord said graciously, "Smith, lend me thy forge and put on coal, and I will give youth to this poor old man."

The smith was willing and St. Peter blew the bellows, and as the flames sprung up fierce and bright the Lord took the old man, pushed him into the forge amongst the flames, and the old man shone like a live coal and praised God with a loud voice. Then the Lord went to the water-butt, held the old man in it till the water covered him, and when he was cooled down he gave him his blessing. Then out sprang the old man, upright and healthy and looking as if he were but twenty years old.

The blacksmith, who had been watching intently, now invited them into supper. There lived in the same house a decrepit, half-blind old woman, sister-in-law of the blacksmith, who went to the youth and asked him earnestly whether the fire had not hurt him. He had never felt better in his life, was his answer; he had felt as comfortable in the flames as if he had been sitting in the dew.

All night the old woman kept thinking over what the youth had said, and early next morning, when the Lord continued on his way, after thanking his host, the blacksmith began to think that he would be able to make his sister young again in the same way, for he had watched the proceedings so carefully. He asked her whether she would not like to be like a young girl of eighteen again.

She said, "Yes, indeed!" especially as the youth had been so wonderfully changed.

So the blacksmith blew up the flames and pushed the old woman in, but she began at once to throw herself about and scream "Murder!"

"Sit still, why do you cry and jump about? I will make it yet hotter," and he blew the bellows until the flames sprang up more furiously than ever.

The old woman cried out more and more, until the man began to doubt whether things were going on right, and

he took her out and threw her into the water-butt. There she screamed so loud that the blacksmith's wife and her daughter-in-law, who were upstairs, heard it; they ran down and found the old woman howling and groaning in the water-butt.

GOD'S ANIMALS AND THE DEVIL'S

God created all the animals and chose the wolf to be his dog, but he forgot the goose.

Then the devil arose and said that he too would create, and he made the geese with their long tails. When they went into the meadows they got caught by their tails in thorny hedges, and the devil had to go and liberate them.

At last this made him very angry, and he bit off all their tails, as can be seen to this day by their stumps. Now he let them wander about by themselves; but it happened that the Lord noticed how a fruitful tree had been nibbled at, a noble vine been injured, and fragile plants been spoilt, and he let loose his wolves, which devoured the geese that came near.

When the devil heard of this he came before the Lord and said, "Your creatures have torn mine to pieces."

"Why do you create that which is evil?" asked the Lord.

"Because," answered the devil, "my own nature is evil, and therefore all that I create must be evil too, and I must be paid well for my loss."

"I will pay you. As soon as the foliage falls from the oak trees, then come; your money will be waiting for you."

When all the leaves had fallen from the oak trees the devil came and demanded his pay.

But the Lord said, "Near a church in Constantinople stands a large oak tree which still has all its foliage."

With muttered curses the devil took himself off and went to look for the oak tree, but he lost himself in the wilderness and wandered about for six months before he found his way out, and when he reached home again he found that all the other oak trees were again in full bloom. So he would not claim his money, and in his wrath he put

out the eyes of all his geese and replaced them with his own.

That is why all geese have eyes like the devil's and bitten-off tails, and he always delights in disguising himself like one of them.

THE COCK AND THE BEAM

THERE was once a sorcerer who stood in the midst of a vast multitude and performed many wonderful feats. He showed them a cock which lifted a heavy beam and carried it as if it were as light as a feather.

Now there stood amongst the crowd a maiden who, having just found a four-leafed clover, had grown so clever that no conjuring could deceive her, and she saw that the beam was nothing but a bundle of straw.

"Good people," she cried, "don't you see that the cock is only carrying straw, not a beam?"

The conjurer tried to escape, and the people, seeing how he had cheated them, drove him away with jeers and shouts. He was furious and determined to have his revenge.

After a while the maiden was to be married, and dressed in bridal array she went with a train of attendants through the fields to the church. All at once they came to a stream which was much swollen and over which was no bridge where they could cross over. Then the maiden was alert, lifted up her skirts, and wanted to wade through. But as she stood by the water a man, who proved to be the sorcerer, cried out mockingly, "Hi! where are your eyes that you take that to be water?"

Then her eyes were opened and she saw that she was standing holding up her dress in the middle of a flax field. The people saw it too and drove her away with shouts and laughter.

THE OLD BEGGAR WOMAN

THERE was once an old woman—you have no doubt seen an old woman begging—well, this old woman begged too,

and when they gave her anything she said, "God will reward you." The beggar woman came to a door, and looking in she saw a gay young fellow warming himself.

When he saw the poor old woman standing by the door shivering he said kindly, "Come in, old mother, and warm yourself."

She came in, but stood so near the fire that her rags began to burn and she did not notice it. The youth, when he saw it, should have put out the flames, should he not? And if he had had no water he should have wept so many tears that they would have flowed like two streams and put out the fire.

TWELVE IDLE FELLOWS

TWELVE fellows who had been idle all day, not wishing to exert themselves too much in the evening, lay down in the grass and boasted about their laziness.

The first one said, "What does your idleness matter to me? I have enough to do with my own. The welfare of my body is my chief thought; I eat not a little and drink still more. When I have had four meals I fast a little until I feel hungry again. That suits me best. I don't care to get up early, and by midday it is time for me to lie down again. When the master calls I pretend not to hear, and when he calls a second time I still wait a bit before I get up, and then go as slowly as ever I can. In this way only is life endurable."

The second one said, "I have to look after a horse, but I leave him all day with the bit in his mouth, and if I don't choose I give him no food, and pretend he has already had it. Then I lie down in the stall and sleep four hours. After that I put out one foot and rub him up and down once or twice. That is all the grooming he gets. What is the good of doing more? But even then my work is too hard for me."

The third said, "Why plague yourself with so much work? You will gain nothing by it. I lie in the sun and sleep. If it begins to rain, why get up? I tell it to go on raining in God's name. Once came such a heavy

storm that my hair was torn off and blown away, and I got a hole in my skull. I put a plaster over it, and that was all right. Accidents of that sort often happen to me."

The fourth said, "If I have some work to do I dawdle about for an hour first to spare my strength, then I start quite leisurely, and ask if there is not some one about who can help me. I let him do the hardest part and look on myself, but even that is too much for me."

The fifth said, "Just think of this. I have to carry the manure out of the stable and take it away on a cart. I do it very slowly, and when I have got some on the fork I raise it in the air and then rest for a quarter of an hour before I throw it in the cart. It is quite enough if I manage one cartful a day. I have no wish to work myself to death."

The sixth said, "Are you not ashamed of yourselves? I am not afraid of work, but I often lie down three weeks at a time without taking off my things. Why have laces to your shoes? I would let my boots drop off sooner than tie them. When I go upstairs I drag one foot after the other very slowly. On the first step I stop and count how many there are, so that I shall know where to sit down and rest."

The seventh said, "That would not do for me, for my master keeps an eye on my work, but fortunately he is always out. Even then I shirk nothing, and even run if anybody is looking, and pretend that it would require four strong men to drag me away from my work. When I see some men lying sleeping I lie down too, and sleep, and there is no waking me again. If they wanted me at home they would have to carry me there."

The eighth said, "I see that I am the only lively one. If a stone is lying in front of me I do not take the trouble to raise my foot and step over it. Then if I fall and get wet and covered with dirt and mud I lie there until the sun has dried me; the most I can do is to turn and dry the other side."

The ninth said, "This is still better. To-day my bread was lying in front of me, but I was too lazy to stretch out my hand and take it; there was a jug standing beside it, but it was too big and heavy for me to lift, and I preferred

to go thirsty. Even to turn round was too much trouble, and I lay there all day like a log."

The tenth said, "I have got myself injured through my laziness. Three of us were lying on the road, and I had stretched out my legs; then a carriage passed, and the wheel went over me. I could certainly have drawn back my legs, but I did not hear the carriage coming; the gnats were buzzing round my ears and getting into my nose and mouth. Who would take the trouble to drive the insects away? I got a broken ankle and a swollen calf."

The eleventh said, "Yesterday I gave up my situation. I had no mind to fetch and carry great heavy books. There was no end to it. To tell the truth, he gave me notice; he would not keep me because I had left his clothes in the dust and they had got moth-eaten. And I was delighted to go."

The twelfth said, "This morning I had to drive a waggon through the fields. I made myself a bed of straw and went to sleep. The reins slipped out of my hand, and when I woke the horse had nearly pulled himself loose; the harness was gone, the back straps, collar, bridle, and bit. Somebody had passed and had walked off with it. Added to this, the wheel was caught in a rut and stood firm. I let it stay, and stretched myself again on the straw. At last the master came himself and pushed the waggon out, and had he not come I should now be lying there instead of here, and should be sleeping peacefully."

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD BOY

THERE was once a little shepherd lad who had become famous far and wide for the clever answers he made to every question. The king of the country heard of this boy, but would not believe the report made of him, so the shepherd boy was ordered to come to court. On his arrival the king said to him, "If you can answer me each of the three questions I am going to put to you I'll bring you up as my own child and you shall live in the palace here with me."

"What are the three questions?" asked the boy.

"The first is, how many drops of water are there in the sea?"

"My lord king," answered the shepherd boy, "cause all the waters on the earth to be stopped that not one drop shall run into the sea till I've done counting, and then I will tell you how many drops there are in the sea."

The king said, "The second question is, 'How many stars are there in the sky?'"

"Give me a large sheet of paper," said the boy; and with a pin he made so many little holes in the paper that no one could distinguish or count them, and whoever looked at them had his eyes dazzled by their number. When he had done this he said, "There are as many stars in the sky as there are holes in this paper; count them." But nobody could do it.

Then the king said, "The third question is, how many moments are there in Eternity?"

"In Lower Pomerania is the adamantine mountain, which is one mile high, one mile broad, and one mile deep. Once in every thousand years a bird comes to the mountain and rubs his beak against it, and when the whole mountain shall have been rubbed away then the first moment of eternity will be past."

Then said the king, "You have answered the three questions like a wise man, and you shall live with me in my palace and I will bring you up as my child."

THE STAR DOLLARS

THERE was once a little girl whose father and mother had died, and the child was so poor that she had no little room to live in and no little bed to sleep in; and at last she had nothing left but the clothes she wore and a piece of bread that a charitable soul had given her. But she was a good, gentle child.

And being thus abandoned by all the world she went out into the fields thinking, "God will take care of me." On her way she met a poor man, who said, "Alas, I am so hungry; pray give me something to eat." Then she gave

him the whole piece of bread and said, "God help you!" and went on.

Then there came a child crying and saying, "My head is so cold; give me something to cover it with." Then she took off her cap and gave it to the child. And when she had gone a little way further another child came, who was cold because it had no bodice, and she gave it the one she wore; and a little further on she met another who begged for her skirt, which she gave away too.

At last she came to a wood, and when the darkness had already come another child met her and begged for her flannel petticoat. And the good child thought, "It is a dark night, and no one will see me," and she gave away her flannel petticoat.

So she had nothing in the world left to call her own. But as she stood there some bright stars fell from heaven, and when she picked them up they were bright, shining silver dollars, and instead of the petticoat she had given away she had one of the very finest linen. Then the child gathered the dollars in her skirt and was rich for her whole life long.

THE STOLEN HELLERS

A FATHER once sat with his wife and children at dinner, and a kind friend who had come on a visit was also dining with them. At twelve o'clock the guest saw the door open and a child pale as death dressed in snow-white garments came in. The child did not look round, but walked straight into the adjoining room. Soon afterwards it passed out again as noiselessly as it had come. A second and a third day it came and vanished in the same way. Then at last the guest inquired of his host who the beautiful child in white was who every day at dinner-time appeared and went into the bedroom beyond.

"I have seen no child," answered the host, "and so cannot tell you who it is."

The next day when it came again the guest pointed it out to his host, but he could not see it, and his wife and

children said they could not see it either. The guest then stood up and followed as far as the bedroom door, opened it a little and peeped in. He saw the child sitting on the floor digging with its fingers diligently in the cracks between the boards. On seeing the stranger looking at her she vanished immediately.

He went back to the table and related what he had seen in the bedroom and described the child exactly.

The mother recognised the description as that of a dear child of her own who had died a few weeks ago. She went and searched under the boards and found two hellers which the child had once been told by her mother to give a poor man, but instead she had kept them to buy a cake for herself and hidden them under the boards. And now, in consequence of this theft, the child couldn't rest in her grave, and came every day at dinner-time to search for the hellers.

The parents now gave the coins to a beggar, and after that the child was not seen again.

THE CHOICE OF A BRIDE

THERE was once upon a time a young shepherd who wanted to marry, and he knew three sisters who were all equally beautiful, and he could not decide which of them to choose. Then he asked his mother's advice in the matter and she said—

"Invite them all three to supper, and give them cheese and then watch how they cut it."

The youth did as his mother advised. The first swallowed her cheese, rind and all; the second hastily cut the rind off, and threw a good deal of good cheese away with it; the third pared the rind very evenly and exactly, neither taking off too much nor too little.

The shepherd told his mother the result of his observations, and she said decisively, "Take the third for your wife."

This he did, and lived happily and comfortably with her, and never repented his choice.

THE WASTEFUL GIRL

THERE was once a young girl who was pretty, but careless and idle. When they made her spin she set about her work in such a negligent manner that rather than disentangle the little knots she met with in the flax she used to break off long pieces and throw them down on the ground about her. Her maid, who was an industrious girl, picked up all these ends of flax, cleared them, spun them very finely, and had a pretty dress made of them.

A youth had asked the careless girl in marriage, and the wedding was about to be celebrated. The evening before the grand day the industrious servant girl danced in her new gown, and the bride began singing—

> "Look at the girl there dancing,
> In the shreds I threw away."

Her bridegroom inquired what she meant, and she told him that with the flax she had thrown away her servant had made herself a dress. When the young man heard that, and saw the industry of the one girl and the wastefulness of the other, he left his betrothed, and chose the servant for his wife.

THE SPARROW AND ITS FOUR YOUNG ONES

A SPARROW put her four young ones in a swallow's nest. By the time they were fledged, some wicked boys came and pulled down the nest, but the fledglings fortunately escaped. The old bird now felt very sad at the thought of her children going out into the world without first being prepared by her for the dangers they would encounter there, and without her good advice.

At the beginning of autumn several sparrows met together in a wheat-field, and the old sparrow encountered her own young. Greatly rejoicing she took them home.

"Alas! my dear sons," she exclaimed, "what anxiety

you have caused me all through this summer by taking wing on your own hook! Little birds have great perils before them, you know. Now take my advice, and always follow your mother's example."

Then she asked the eldest of the four what he had been doing during the summer, and how he had existed.

"I have lived in the gardens on caterpillars and worms till the cherries were ripe," was the answer.

"Oh, my son," said the mother, "there is much danger in that sort of pastime, so be careful, especially when people promenade the gardens with long green poles which are hollow inside and have a hole at the top."

"Yes, mother, but suppose the holes have little green leaves stuck over them with wax, what then?" asked the son.

"Where did you see such a thing?"

"In a merchant's garden, mother."

Then she replied, "Oh, my son, merchants are shrewd and clever people. If you have been among such people of the world as merchants you must have learnt worldly wisdom. Make use of it, and don't be over-confident."

She next asked the others how they had lived, and where.

One replied, "At court."

"Sparrows and silly little birds," said his mother, "are not at home in such places. What can they make of gold, velvets, silks, and all the rest of it? Keep to the stable-yard, and when there is thrashing going on you can get your daily share of corn."

"Yes, mother," said the son, "but when the grooms and stable-boys put their traps in the straw, or shoot with their catapults, many a bird is wounded or beheaded."

"How do you know that?" asked the old bird.

"I have seen it with my own eyes among the grooms and yard-boys."

"Oh, my dear son, yard-boys are bad boys! If you have really been to court, and associated with the lackeys and grooms, and have left no feathers behind you, then you are certainly able to look after yourself. But all the same, be wary; the most knowing dogs have often been devoured by wolves."

The mother then catechised the third of her sons. "Where did *you* go to find a living?" she asked.

"On the high roads and lanes, where I have picked up corn and grain," he said, "from the carts."

"Very good food and wholesome," said the old mother, "but keep your weather-eye open, and remember when you see a waggoner stoop to pick up a stone it means mischief."

"Yes, I know," said the third son, "but suppose one of them carried a brick or a stone hidden in his breast-pocket?"

"Where did you find out that?"

"Oh, I have remarked that the mountain-folk, before they drive their waggon out, generally take big stones with them."

"Mountain-folk, waggoners! They are astute people. If you have mixed with them you must know a few things. Nevertheless, fly away and be cautious. Mountain rascals have often worked the ruin of a sparrow with the aid of cobolds."

At last the mother turned to the fourth and youngest son.

"You, my dear baby nestling, always the silliest and weakest of my brood, stay with me. The world is full of bigger and coarser birds, with hooked beaks and long claws, whose only employment is to pounce on the little and weak, and swallow them. So stay and clear the little caterpillars from the trees, and the house-spiders, and you will be happy and content."

"Oh, my mother," said her Benjamin, "who lives an honest life and doesn't interfere with others, no vulture, eagle, or hawk will harm. He has only to pray thankfully morning and night for sustenance to the dear God who is the creator and maintainer of all the birds of the forest. He hears the prayer of even the young ravens, and He knows the fall of every sparrow."

"Where have you learnt all this?" asked the mother.

Her son answered, "The great hurricane that tore me from you took me to a church. There I spent the summer in keeping the windows free of spiders and bluebottles, and heard the preacher preach what I've told you. So the

Father of all sparrows fed and guarded me from all misfortune, and from birds of prey through the summer."

"Ah, my dear little son," exclaimed the mother, "you have learnt the most valuable knowledge indeed. I will trust you to go to the churches in future. There keep the windows clear of spiders and bluebottles, pipe like the young ravens your praises to the Everlasting Creator, and so you will keep well and safe, even if the whole world were full of nothing but the fiercest wild birds."

THE LEGEND OF SLY MONKEY-LAND

In the age of monkeys I went out one day and saw all Rome and the Lateran hanging in the air by a silken-thread. And then I saw a man without feet spring on to a flying horse, and I saw a sword so sharp it cut a bridge in two. And I saw a young donkey with a silver nose hunting two hares; and a linden-tree on which grew nothing but big flat cakes. Then I saw two dried-up old crones carrying a hundred cartloads of dripping on their backs, and sixty cartloads of salt. Isn't that a good big story? Then I saw a plough ploughing without horses or oxen, a child of one year old throw four millstones from Ratisbon to Treves, and from Treves to Strasbourg; and a hawk swim over the Rhine. I also heard fish making a row that echoed in the sky; and saw a stream of honey flowing like water from a deep valley up a steep mountain. Strange occurrences these!

And I saw two crows mow a meadow, and two grasshoppers building a bridge, and two doves ripping up a wolf, and two frogs thrashing corn. I saw two mice consecrate a bishop, and two cats scratch out a bear's tongue. Then a snail ran up and slew two wild lions; and there stood a barber shaving off a lady's beard; and two babies in long clothes told their mother she was talking nonsense. Then two greyhounds carried a windmill out of the water, and an old scarecrow stood by and watched with approval. And in the farmyard were four horses beating carpets with all their might, and two goats were heating the oven and a red cow shoved the bread in. Then a cock

crowed, "Cock-a-doodle-do!" That's the end of the story. Cock-a-doodle-do!

THE LEGEND OF DITMARSCH

I WILL tell you a story. Listen! I saw two roast fowls flying, and they flew with their backs towards the earth, and their stomachs towards heaven. Very slowly a millstone and a forge swam over the Rhine, and a frog sat on the ice at Whitsuntide eating a scythe. Three fellows came along on stilts and crutches to catch a hare. One was deaf, the second blind, the third dumb, and the fourth lame. The blind man saw the hare first, the dumb man shouted to the deaf man, and the lame man caught the hare by the scruff of its neck. A party wanted to go for a sail on dry land, and turned their sails to the wind, and voyaged over wide acres; they sailed up a high mountain at last, and met their death by drowning. A crab put a hare to flight, and a cow lay dead on the roof. In this country flies are as big as goats. Now open the window and let all these lies fly out.

A PUZZLING STORY

ONCE upon a time three women were changed into flowers, and grew in a field; but one of them was allowed to go home at night. So once she said to her husband, just as day dawned and as she was going back to her companions in the field and to be retransformed into a flower, "Come to-day at noon and break me off, and I shall be free and able to live with you." And this was done.

But now the question is, "How did the husband know his wife?" for all the flowers were like one another, and no difference could be seen. I'll tell you how it was. During the night she spent at home with her husband the dew fell upon her two companions in the field, and the husband knew which flower was his wife, by there being no dew upon it.

SNOWY-WHITE AND ROSY-RED

A POOR widow lived alone in a little cottage, and in front of the cottage was a garden, in which stood two rose-trees. One of them bore red and the other white roses, and the woman had two children, who were like the two rose-trees; so one of them was called Snowy-white and the other Rosy-red. They were as good a pair of children, as industrious and persevering, as ever two children have been in all the world, but Snowy-white was quieter and more gentle than Rosy-red. Rosy-red was fond of roaming about in the fields and meadows, searching for flowers and catching butterflies; but Snowy-white would sit at home with her mother, helping her in the household, or reading to her when there was nothing else to do. The two children loved one another, so that they always held each other's hands whenever they went out together; and when little Snowy-white said, "We'll never leave one another," Rosy-red would answer, "Not all our life long;" and the mother added, "Whatever one of you children has, it should share with the other." They often ran out alone into the woods to gather redberries; but no animal did them any harm. On the contrary, they would come towards the children, quite as if they were tame. The timid hare would nibble a cabbage-leaf from their hands, the does grazed beside them, the stag sprang merrily past, and the birds would quietly remain sitting on the branches of the trees, singing away with all their might. No misfortune ever befell them: if they happened to be belated in the wood, and night came upon them, they lay down side by side on the soft moss, and slept till the morning came; and their mother knew that, and was not disquieted about them.

Once, when they passed the night in the wood in this way, and the red dawn of morning awoke them, they saw a beautiful child, in a shining white dress, sitting near where they had slept. The child stood up and looked smilingly at them, but it said nothing, and went away into the wood; and when they looked round they found they had been sleeping quite close to an abyss, into which they

would certainly have fallen if they had gone a few steps farther in the darkness. Their mother told them this child must have been the angel who watches over good children.

Snowy-white and Rosy-red kept their mother's little cottage so beautifully clean that it was quite a pleasant place to look at. In the summer Rosy-red looked to the house, and put a nosegay in front of her mother's bed every morning before she awoke, and in the nosegay there was always a rose from each tree. In the winter Snowy-white lighted the fire, and hung the kettle on its hook over the blaze. The kettle was a brass one, but it shone like gold, it was rubbed so clean. In the evening, when the snowflakes fell, the mother used to say, "Go, Snowy-white, and bolt the door;" and then they would sit down by the hearth, and the mother put on her spectacles, and read aloud out of a great book, and the two girls listened as they sat spinning; a little lamb lay beside them on the floor, and behind them, on its perch, sat a white dove, with its head hidden under its wing.

One evening, as they thus sat comfortably together, somebody knocked at the door as if desirous of being let in. "Rosy-red," said the mother, "make haste and open the door; no doubt it is some wanderer, who wants a shelter for the night."

Rosy-red went and drew back the bolt. She thought at first the visitor was some poor man, but, on the contrary, it was a bear who thrust his great black head in at the door. Rosy-red ran back, screaming loudly; the lamb began to bleat, the dove fluttered up, and Snowy-white hid herself behind her mother's bed. But the bear began to speak, and said, "Don't be afraid; I will do you no harm; I am half frozen to death, and only want to warm myself a little."

"You poor bear," cried the mother, "come and lie down by the fire, only take care you don't scorch your fur." Then she called to Snowy-white and Rosy-red to come out, "for," said she, "the bear won't do you any harm—his intentions are honourable."

So they both came forward; and by degrees the lamb and the dove came near too, and were not afraid of him.

Then the bear said, "Children, please to shake the moss off my fur for me;" and they brought the broom and swept him all over; and he stretched himself before the fire and began growling to himself in quite a gratified way. They soon became quite familiar with their clumsy guest, and began to play him all kinds of tricks. They pulled and pinched his fur; they put their feet on his back, and pushed him to and fro, and even took a hazel-rod and beat him; and when he grumbled they laughed. The bear let them do as they liked; but when they played too roughly he said, "Spare my life, you children!

"Snowy-white and Rosy-red,
Don't kill your lover, or he'll be dead."

When it grew late, and the rest went to bed, the mother said to the bear, "If you like, you may stay where you are, before the fire; you'll be sheltered there from the cold and from the bad weather."

As soon as it was daylight the two children let him out, and he trotted away, over the snow, into the wood. From that time the bear came every evening at the same hour, lay down on the hearth, and let the children pull him about and play with him to their hearts' content; and they grew so used to him that the door was not bolted until their black visitor had arrived.

When spring had come, and everything was green in forest and meadow, the bear said one morning to Snowy-white, "I must go away now, and shall not be able to come again throughout the whole summer."

"Where are you going, dear bear?" asked Snowy-white.

"I must go into the wood and guard my treasures from the wicked dwarfs. In winter, when the ground is frozen hard, they're obliged to stay down below, and cannot work their way out; but now, when the sun has warmed and thawed the earth, they break through, and come up to forage about and steal; and what they once get into their clutches, and carry off into their holes, is not easily brought to the light of day."

Snowy-white was quite sorry that the bear was going

away. She unbolted the door for him, and as the bear pushed his way out he grazed himself against the latch of the door, and tore his skin ; and Snowy-white fancied she saw gold glittering under his fur, but she was not quite certain. As for the bear, he ran off as fast as he could, and had soon disappeared behind the trees.

Soon afterwards the mother sent the children into the forest to collect firewood. They came to a great tree, which had been felled and was lying on the ground ; and something was struggling in the grass near the trunk, but they could not distinguish what it was. When they drew nearer they saw a dwarf, with an old wrinkled face and a snowy white beard an ell long. The end of his beard had caught in a cleft in the trunk, and the little man was jumping to and fro like a puppy pulling at a string, not knowing what to do to get loose. He glared at the girls with his red, fiery eyes, and cried, "What are you standing there for ? Can't you come and help me ?"

"What have you been about, little man ?" asked Rosy-red.

"You silly, inquisitive monkey !" answered the dwarf, "I wanted to split that tree, to get little bundles of wood for my kitchen. If we were to use thick logs the little dishes that we prepare would be burnt, for we don't gobble enormous quantities, like you coarse, greedy people. I'd driven my wedge in, and should have got on well enough, but the plaguey wedge was too smooth, and sprang out before I was aware of it ; and the cleft in the tree closed so suddenly that I hadn't time to draw out my beautiful white beard ; so now it's caught fast, and I can't get away. Look now, they're laughing, the stupid, milk-faced things ! Fie upon you ! I detest you !"

The children tried with all their might, but they could not pull out the beard ; it was wedged in too firmly. "I will run and bring some people to help you," said Rosy-red.

"You stupid creatures !" screamed the dwarf ; "what's the use of calling people ? There are too many of you already for my fancy ; can't you think of anything better than that ?"

"Don't be impatient," said Snowy-white. "I'll manage

it for you ; " and she took a little pair of scissors from her pocket and cut off the end of his beard.

As soon as the dwarf felt himself free he seized a sack which he had hidden among the roots of the tree, and which was filled with gold, then he began grumbling to himself, " Rude, unmannerly people, cutting off a great bit of my beautiful beard ! Plague upon 'em both ! " then he shouldered his sack and marched off without so much as looking at the children.

Some time afterwards, Snowy-white and Rosy-red went out to the river, in hopes of bringing home a dish of fish. When they came near the water, they perceived something that looked like a big grasshopper jumping towards the water, as if it were going to plunge in. They ran up, and recognised the dwarf.

" What are you about ? " said Rosy-red. " Are you going to jump into the water ? "

" I'm not such a fool ! " squeaked the dwarf. " Don't you see it's this villainous fish that wants to pull me in ? "

The little fellow had sat there fishing ; and, unfortunately, his beard had been entangled in the line, so that when a great fish came and took the bait soon afterwards, the weak manikin had not the power to draw it out, and the fish, being the stronger of the two, was pulling the dwarf into the water. In vain he clutched at the rushes and at tufts of grass—it was of no use ; he was obliged to follow the movements of the fish, and was in imminent danger of being drawn in. The girls were just in time to hold him back, and wanted to disentangle his beard from the line ; but this was impossible, for beard and line were hopelessly interwoven. There was nothing for it but to pull out the scissors and clip the beard, so that a small portion of it was sacrificed. When the dwarf saw that, he yelled out, " Is that the way, you blockheads, you disfigure people ? Not content with clipping my beard the other day, you must go and cut a great bit more off, so that I shall be ashamed to show my face among my friends. I wish you had to run through the world without soles to your shoes ! " and he snatched up a sack full of pearls that was lying among the rushes, and without another word began dragging it away, and disappeared behind a great stone.

It happened soon afterwards that their mother sent the two girls to the neighbouring town to buy needles, thread, laces, and ribbons. Their way lay across a heath, on whose surface great fragments of rock were scattered here and there. Then they saw a great bird soaring in the air, and wheeling slowly round above them in circles. At last it came swooping down by a piece of rock not far from them. Directly afterwards they heard a lamentable, piercing cry. Running up to see what was the matter, they found their old acquaintance the dwarf, whom the eagle had seized in his talons and was about to bear away. The kind-hearted children at once laid hold of the little man, and struggled with the eagle until he quitted his prey. But when the dwarf had recovered from his fright, he squeaked out, in his little thin voice, "Couldn't you have been a little more gentle with me? You've been tugging at my little thin coat till it is hanging about me in tatters—stupid, clumsy things that you are!" Then he took up a sack of precious stones and crept into his hole among the rocks. The children were used to his ingratitude; they continued their journey, and transacted their business in the town.

In crossing the heath on their return they came suddenly upon the dwarf, who had poured out his sack of precious stones on a clean place on the rock, never expecting to see any one pass so late. The setting sun shone on the glittering jewels, and they glanced and sparkled so beautifully in their different hues, that the children stood still to look at them. "What do you stand there for, with your mouths open, staring?" cried the dwarf, and his sallow face grew fiery red with anger.

He was going on scolding and abusing them, when a loud growling was heard, and a black bear came trotting out of the wood. The dwarf jumped up in a fright, but could not get back to his hiding-place, for the bear was already too close to him. Then he cried out, in great terror, "Dear Master Bear, pray spare me, and I will give you all my treasures; look at the beautiful precious stones that are lying there! Pray give me my life. What use would such a little skinny fellow as I am be to you? You would not have a mouthful of me; but there are those two wicked girls yonder, they're

capital feeding for you—fat as young quails; eat them up, I beg of you." But the bear, instead of paying any attention to this wicked creature's words, gave him such a blow with his paw that he fell down and never moved again.

The little girls were running away, but the bear called after them, "Snowy-white and Rosy-red, don't be afraid; wait a moment, and I'll go with you." Then they knew his voice, and stood still; and when the bear had overtaken them his skin suddenly fell off, and he stood there as a handsome man, dressed in cloth of gold from head to foot. "I am a king's son," he said, "and had been condemned by the wicked dwarf, who had stolen my treasures, to run about in the woods as a wild bear till I should be delivered by his death. Now he has received his well-merited punishment."

Snowy-white married the prince, and Rosy-red married his brother, and they divided the great treasures which the dwarf had collected in his cave. The old mother lived for many years, quietly and happily with her children. She took the two rose-trees with her, and they stood before her window, and bore the most beautiful roses, white and red, every year.

THE CLEVER SERVANT

HAPPY is the master and well fares it with his household when he is served by a reliable fellow who hears his words and yet acts on his own discretion.

Such a faithful Hans was dispatched once by his master to look for a lost cow. He was out a long time, and the master thought, "Hans spares himself no trouble in the discharge of his duties." As, however, time went on and he didn't return the master thought something must have happened to him and went out to see. After searching for him a long time he saw his servant running up and down a big field.

"Hans!" he shouted, when he had overtaken him; "have you found the cow I sent you to look for?"

"No, master," answered Hans. "I haven't found the cow and I haven't looked for it."

"What have you been doing then?"

"Oh! I have found something better than a cow."

"What, Hans?"

"Three blackbirds. I can see one, hear another, and I am chasing the third."

Take Hans for an example, and instead of heeding your master's commands do what enters your head first and you will make as clever and trusty a servant as Hans.

THE GLASS COFFIN

NEVER say that a poor tailor cannot get on and attain an honourable position. It is only necessary for him to go the right way to work and to meet with good luck.

A worthy young tailor once started on his travels and came to a great forest, where he lost his way. Night came on and there was nothing for it but to seek a couch in this terrible solitude. The soft moss truly made a comfortable bed, but his fear of wild beasts was so great that he couldn't sleep a wink, and he at last resolved to climb up a tree. He looked for the highest oak, mounted to the topmost branch, and thanked God that he had his flat-iron on him, otherwise the wind would have swept him off.

After he had spent a few hours thus in the darkness, not without fear and trembling, he became aware of a shimmering light shining at a little distance from him. Thinking it might come from a human dwelling, where he might be more comfortably lodged than in the branches of a bare tree, he descended cautiously and went in the direction of the light. He found himself soon standing before a little house made of reeds and rushes. He knocked courageously and the door opened. In the light that streamed through it he saw a little grey old manikin, who wore a suit fastened with bright coloured lappets.

"Who are you and what do you want?" he asked in a harsh, grating voice.

"I am a poor tailor," he answered. "I have lost my

way at night in this wilderness, and I pray you to take me in to your hut till morning."

"Go your way," was the sulky response. "I can have nothing to do with tramps. Seek a lodging elsewhere."

He tried then to slip back into his house, but the tailor caught him by the coat-tails and begged so earnestly not to be shut out that the little old fellow, who was not so bad as he had seemed, at last yielded. He took him in, gave him food and a corner to sleep in.

The weary tailor fell asleep instantly and slept till the morning. He would not have got up then had he not been roused by a terrific noise. Such a shrieking and bellowing as penetrated through the thin walls he had never heard. The tailor, seized by an unwonted courage, jumped up, put on his clothes hastily, and rushed out to see what was the matter. He saw close to the house a huge black bull and a lovely stag engaged in a deadly combat. They charged each other with such fury that the ground quite shook with the trampling of their hoofs and the air was rent by their cries. It seemed for a long time uncertain which would be victorious. At last the stag thrust his horns into the middle of his opponent's body and with a horrible howl and bellow the bull sank to the earth, and it took only a few more blows of the stag's horns to kill him outright.

The tailor, who had witnessed the conflict in astonishment, stood motionless, when the stag suddenly turned and gored him before he could escape. Impaled on his huge antlers, he was borne over stream and wood, hill and dale, and abandoned himself to his fate. It was just like flying. Then the stag stopped in front of a wall of rocks and gently dropped the tailor. More dead than alive, it took some time for him to regain consciousness. When he had recovered a little he saw the stag, who stood beside him, batter his antlers against a door in the rock till he had burst it open. Flames belched out and great clouds of smoke, in which the stag disappeared.

The tailor wondered which way he should turn to find his way back to the haunts of man, when he heard a voice from inside the rock say, "Walk in fearlessly, no harm shall come to you." He trembled, yet an instinctive

impulse made him obey the voice, and he passed through the iron door into a lofty, spacious hall, whose ceiling, floor, and walls consisted of cut square stones, on every one of which an unknown design was engraven. He looked at it all in admiration, and was in the act of going out again when the voice said again, "Step on to the stone which lies in the centre of the hall and great happiness will be yours." His courage was now equal to obeying without hesitation. The stone, so soon as he stood on it, began to give under his feet and he sank slowly into the depths. When he again stood on *terra firma* he was in another hall the same size as the other. Here, too, there was a great deal to wonder at and admire. In the walls were hewn recesses, in which stood transparent cut-glass jars filled with coloured spirits or with blue smoke. On the floor of the hall two glass cases were arranged opposite each other, and these excited his curiosity greatly. In one was a beautiful model building in the form of a castle, with stables, barns, and outbuildings all complete. It was small, but of delicate and exquisite workmanship, and must have been carved by the hand of a master.

He could not have torn his eyes away from this fascinating sight had not the voice made itself heard again and told him to turn round and look at the other glass case.

What was his amazement and delight to see in it a girl of surpassing beauty. She was lying apparently asleep, and her long, fair hair wrapt her as if in a costly mantle. The eyes were fast shut, but her bright complexion, and a ribbon that her breathing gently swayed to and fro, left no doubt that she was alive. The tailor contemplated the beautiful vision with a beating heart when suddenly her eyes opened, and at sight of him she went into a frenzy of joy.

"Great heavens!" she cried, "my deliverance has come! Quick, quick! Help me out of my prison. If you'll just slip the bolt of this glass coffin I shall be free."

The tailor obeyed unhesitatingly, and she lifted the glass cover and came out. She hurried into a corner of the hall, where she covered herself with a long cloak. Then she sat down on a stone bench, bidding the young man

sit beside her, and after she had given him a friendly kiss on the lips, she said, "My long expected deliverer! Kind Heaven has brought you to me to end all my suffering, and on the same day it ends, *your* happiness dawns. For you are my heaven-sent husband and you shall have all good things heaped on you and spend the rest of your life in unclouded prosperity. Listen now to the story of my past.

"I am the daughter of a rich count. My parents died when I was still very small, and they commended me as they died to the care of my eldest brother, who brought me up. We loved each other so tenderly, and were so in sympathy, sharing exactly the same opinions about everything, that we resolved neither of us should ever marry, but live together to the end of our lives. There was no lack of society in our house; neighbours and friends visited us constantly, and we showed hospitality to all. It happened one night that a stranger rode up to our castle, and on the plea that he could not reach the next village till very late, he asked to be put up. We acceded to his request with ready courtesy, and he entertained us at supper with his lively conversation and amusing stories. My brother took a great fancy to him and asked him to stay a few days with us. After a little demur he accepted the invitation. It was getting quite late when we rose from the table; the stranger was shown his room, and I, worn out, hastened to stretch my tired limbs on my feather mattress. Scarcely had I dozed off than I awoke to the sound of soft, enchanting music. As I couldn't understand where it came from, I thought of calling my maid, who slept in the dressing-room, but when I tried to do so I felt, to my horror, as if I had a mountain on my chest, and I could neither utter a sound nor stir a limb. As I lay thus I saw by the light of the night-lamp, the stranger coming through the double doors of my room. He drew near to me and said that he had, by the power of his magic, ordered the exquisite music to play and wake me, and had come now himself to offer me his hand and heart. The thought of his being a magician so repulsed me that I remained silent. He stood motionless, looking at me for some time, probably in the expectation of my coming to a

decision in his favour. But as I continued silent he declared wrathfully that he would be revenged and find means to punish my pride. He then left the room. I spent the rest of the night in wakefulness and horror and only slumbered towards morning. Directly I was up I hurried to my brother to tell him what had happened, but he was not in his room, and his servant told me that at daybreak he had ridden out to the hunt accompanied by the stranger. I had a presentiment of coming disaster. Hastily I made my toilet, ordered my hunter to be saddled, and with only one servant rode to the forest. The servant's horse stumbled and went lame and I had to continue my road alone. In a few minutes I saw the stranger leading a splendid stag by a rope. He came towards me, and I asked where my brother was and how he came by the stag, out of whose pathetic great eyes tears were flowing. Instead of answering he laughed loudly and scornfully. This made me extremely angry and I drew out a pistol and shot at him. A bullet glanced off his chest and pierced the head of my horse. I fell to the ground and the stranger murmured some words over me that robbed me of consciousness. When I came to my senses I found myself in this subterranean vault, encased in a glass coffin. The black-hearted scoundrel appeared once more ; he told me he had changed my brother into a stag. My castle and all its appurtenances he had reduced to a miniature size and shut it in another glass case, and all the servants and people in our employ were shut up in the form of smoke in glass bottles. If I would consent to his proposal all should immediately return to its ordinary shape and size. I remained as silent as the first time he had come to me. He then vanished, leaving me to languish in my imprisonment, where I lay in a tremendous sleep. Among the phantastic pictures that floated before me in my dreams was one of a young man coming to free me, and when I opened my eyes to-day I saw you and knew my dream was fulfilled. Help me now with what remains to be done. First, to lift the glass case in which my castle is enshrined on to that broad stone."

They stood on the stone with the glass case between them, and it began to move and slowly ascend with them

through an opening in the ceiling and here they were soon in the open air. The girl removed the cover, and it was a wonderful spectacle to see how the castle and buildings expanded and quickly became their natural size. They went down again into the vault and brought up the glass bottles, took out the stoppers, so that the blue smoke turned into a crowd of living people in whom the count's daughter recognised her staff of indoor and outdoor servants. Her joy was still further increased when her brother, who had slain the magician in the shape of the black bull, came to meet her in his human form, and on the same day the charming girl, true to her promise, gave the fortunate tailor her hand and her heart.

LAZY HEINZ

Heinz was lazy ; and though he had nothing to do but to drive his goat every day to the meadow, he used to groan over his hard day's work when he came home in the evening.

"It's a weary business and that's the truth," he used to say, "to drive a goat from one year's end to another into the fields. If only one might lie down and sleep ! But instead one has to keep one's eyes wide open all the time and look out that the brute doesn't injure the young trees or break through a hedge into a garden. How can any one enjoy life under such circumstances ?" He sat down one night and considered seriously how he could free himself from his irksome yoke. For a long time he reflected in vain, when quite suddenly the scales fell from his eyes.

"I know what I'll do," he exclaimed. "I'll marry fat Trine. She has a goat too. So she can drive mine with it out to graze in the meadows and I shall be saved the trouble."

Heinz rose, dragged his weary, lazy limbs along the street, for fat Trine's parents lived just over the way, and they were kept by their industrious and virtuous daughter.

The parents did not take long to think over the proposal. "Birds of a feather," they said, and gave their consent.

Soon afterwards fat Trine became Heinz's wife and drove both goats out to graze. Heinz had an easy time of it and had nothing to tire him now but his own laziness. Sometimes he went with Trine because, he said, "One cannot enjoy leisure if one forgets altogether what work is like." But in reality Trine was every bit as lazy as he was himself.

"Dear Heinz," she said one day, "why should we embitter our lives now in the best days of youth? Wouldn't it be much better to give the two goats that disturb our slumbers so early in the morning with their tiresome bleating, to our neighbour in exchange for a beehive? We could place the hive in a sunny spot behind the house and take no more trouble. Bees need no attention and watching and needn't be driven into the fields. They fly out of their own accord and come home again and make honey."

"You are a sensible woman," said Heinz. "We will carry out your proposal at once. Besides, honey tastes better and is more nourishing than goat's milk. It also keeps longer."

The neighbour was only too glad to give a hive in exchange for the goats. The bees swarmed in and out and were indefatigable in their labour, filling the hive with the most excellent honey, so that by the autumn Heinz took out a large jar full.

They placed the jar on a shelf over their bed, and because they were afraid that it might be stolen or that mice might get at it Trine fetched a strong hazel switch and laid it at their bedside, so that without getting up she could reach it with her hand and slash at any unbidden guests from her bed and put them to flight.

Lazy Heinz didn't care to get up till noon. "The man who gets up early," he used to say, "infringes his property." One morning, when in broad daylight he still lay among the feather mattresses resting after his long sleep, he said to his wife, "Women love sweets, and you are for ever nibbling at the honey. Before you have eaten it all up, I think we had better change it for a goose and a gosling."

"Wait till we've got a child first," replied Trine, "to

look after them. I don't want to be plagued to death with keeping geese."

"Do you suppose," said Heinz, "that when we have a boy of our own he would tend geese? Nowadays children have given up obeying their parents. They do what they like and have their own way in everything, and think themselves a deal cleverer than their elders."

"Oh, indeed," cried Trine, "if my child doesn't do as he is bid it will be the worse for him. I'll take a stick and tan his skin for him. Look, Heinz, like this;" and in her zeal she seized the switch with which she had intended to rout the mice and brandished it in the air. It brought down the honey jar, which broke to pieces against the wall, and all the fine honey flowed out over the bed on to the floor.

"There lies the goose with the young gosling, and there is no necessity to look out for a goose-herd," said Heinz. "It is a piece of good fortune, though, that the jar didn't fall on my head. We have every reason to be thankful." And seeing some honey lodged in a crack he stretched out and licked it up. "What's left of it, dear wife," said he, quite contentedly, "we will enjoy and then lie quiet a little to recover from the shock we have experienced. It won't matter if we get up a little later than usual. The day is quite long enough."

"Yes," Trine agreed. "One can always be in time for something. Do you remember the snail who was invited to a wedding and arrived in time for the christening? Just as it reached the house it stumbled over the hedge and remarked, 'It never pays to hurry.'"

THE BIRD GREIF

Once upon a time there lived a king, but where he reigned and what was his name I don't know. He had no sons, but an only daughter, who was always ill, and no doctor knew how to cure her.

Some one then foretold that if the king's daughter ate a certain sort of apple she would get well again. So the

king issued a proclamation to the effect that any one who would bring an apple to the princess that would restore her health, should marry her.

A peasant who had three sons said to the eldest, "Go into the orchard, pick a basketful of our choicest apples, and take them to the castle. Perhaps they will make the princess well again. Then you marry her and be king."

So the son gathered the apples and went to the castle. On the way he met an old man, who inquired what he had in his basket.

Ulrich, for that was his name, replied, "Frogs."

The man said, "So be it," and went on.

When Ulrich came to the castle he asked the porter to let him through the gates, as he had brought a hamper of apples which he thought would cure the princess. The king, when he heard this, was delighted, and summoned Ulrich to his presence. But, unfortunately, when the hamper was opened it was found to contain nothing but frogs. The king was exceedingly irate, and had Ulrich turned out of the castle immediately. Ulrich went home and told his father.

Then the peasant dispatched his second son, whose name was Sam, but he did not meet with more success. He came across the same old man, who asked him what he had in his basket, and Sam replied, "Crabs."

When he came to the castle Sam told the porter he had brought a basket of apples which were certain to cure the princess.

The porter replied that they had been taken in once, and it was not likely they would be taken in again.

But Sam declared so positively that there was nothing but apples in the basket, that they let him in at last. The basket was then opened in the king's presence, and was found to contain crabs. The king was furious, and had the man horsewhipped and turned out of the castle.

Sam went home and told his father of his humiliating experience.

The peasant's youngest son, who was nick-named "Stupid Hans," now asked his father if he might go to the castle with a basket of apples.

"You, indeed!" exclaimed his father. "A pretty man to send! If your brothers failed, it is not likely you will succeed."

But Hans persisted in asking to be allowed to go.

"Look here, you stupid fellow," said the father, "wait till you grow a little brighter. For the present leave me in peace."

The peasant turned away impatiently, but Hans went after him, pulled his coat-tails, and said, "Father, I want to go so very much; do let me go."

"All right, get along with you," said the peasant; "but I am sure you will not do better than the others, and worse if possible."

The boy was so delighted at having gained permission to go that he skipped and capered about.

"Doesn't this silly behaviour show what a fool you are?" said his father. "You are even a greater one than I thought."

But Hans was not in the least disconcerted, and went to bed looking forward with joy to the morning. He did not sleep much, but when he did he dreamed of beautiful princesses, splendid castles, and gold and silver. He got up early in the morning, picked the apples, and started for the castle. He met the same little man whom the others had met, and he asked him what he had in his basket. He answered promptly, "Apples to cure the princess."

And the little man said fervently, "So be it."

Of course, when he came to the castle he was not welcomed, and every one was sceptical of there being apples in his basket.

"Two men have been here," they told him, "and insulted the king by bringing him frogs and crabs."

Hans assured them he would not swindle the king for the world, and that he had really brought him a basket of the best apples that grew in the whole kingdom. Hans had such an honest face and spoke so earnestly that it was impossable to suspect him of telling a lie. He was admitted, and when the king opened the basket there indeed was a whole quantity of rosy, tempting-looking apples. The king was overjoyed, and took some at once

to the princess. After she had eaten two or three the servants came and told the king the princess was cured. And almost immediately afterwards his daughter came herself. She told him that directly she had eaten a bit of one apple she had jumped out of bed perfectly well again.

The king was delighted, but after all was loth to give Hans his daughter's hand on the spot. "You must first make me a boat," he said, "which will sail as well on dry land as on the water."

Hans said he would certainly make the boat, and went home and related everything.

The old peasant at once sent Ulrich into the woods to make the required boat. Ulrich set to work quite confidently, whistling and singing.

At about midday, when the sun was at its hottest, the little old man he had met on the road when he was carrying his apples to the king, appeared.

"What are you making there?" he asked."

Ulrich answered, "Wooden spoons," and went on making what he thought was a boat, but when he had finished he found nothing but a pair of wooden spoons.

The following day Sam went, and everything happened to him as it had to Ulrich.

On the third day Stupid Hans was allowed to go. He worked hard, and was very cheerful over it. At midday, when the sun shines most powerfully, the little man appeared and asked him what he was about.

"Making a boat that will sail on dry land as well as on the water; and if I can do it I shall marry the king's daughter perhaps, and be king."

"So be it," said the old man.

At sunset the boat and all its appurtenances was complete, and Hans sailed in it to the town.

The king saw him coming, but still hesitated about letting him marry the princess.

Hans was now asked to keep watch over a hundred hares from early morning till late at night. If he lost one of them he would lose the princess.

Hans started at once with his hares, and as he took such good care not to let one out of his sight, a servant was

sent from the castle to ask him for a hare. The excuse was that visitors had come unexpectedly and the hare was wanted for dinner.

But Hans saw it was a trick, and said, "Tell the king to have a hare served to-morrow instead of to-day."

The servant was, however, very unwilling to depart without the hare, and Hans said at last, "If the princess will come herself to fetch it I will give her a hare."

When the servant was gone the little man appeared again and asked Hans what he was doing.

"I am keeping watch over a hundred hares," was the answer, "and if I lose one I shall not be allowed to marry the princess."

"Take this whistle," said the little man, "and if a hare escapes, whistle and it will come back instantly."

When the princess came Hans gave her the hare and put it in a kerchief for her. She had not carried it a hundred yards when Hans whistled, and the hare wriggled out of the handkerchief and ran back.

Before night came, Hans whistled again to see if all the hares were there, and then drove them to the castle.

The king was much surprised at this proof of Hans being able to look after a hundred hares without losing one. Yet he still declined to let him marry the princess till he had done something else. This time he was to bring him a feather out of the bird Greif's tail.

Hans started off to fetch it. At night he came to a castle, for in those days there were no inns. He saw the master of the castle, and asked to be put up for a night. When he was asked where he was going, he said, "To the bird Greif."

"Oh, indeed," answered the man, "you are going to the bird Greif, are you? I have been told he is an oracle and knows everything. I have lost the key of my money-box. Will you be so kind as to ask him where I am to find it?"

"With pleasure," said Hans.

Early in the morning he started off. That night he put up at another castle. When the people staying there heard he was on his way to the bird Greif, two of them told him their daughter was ill and they had tried in vain to cure

her. Would he kindly ask the bird Greif for a prescription to make her well again ?

Hans promised and went off. He came to a lake where, instead of a ferry boat, a big, strong man was employed to carry people across to the other side of the water. The man asked Hans where he was travelling to.

"To Bird Greif," answered Hans.

"Well, if you find him," said the man, "just ask him why I have to carry people across this water."

"All right," said Hans, "I will ask him."

The man took him over the water, and after that he soon reached Bird Greif's castle, but the bird was not at home ; only his wife was in. She asked him what he wanted.

Hans told her everything. First, he wanted a feather out of Bird Greif's tail ; secondly, he wanted to know where the lost key of a cash-box was ; thirdly, he was to ask for a prescription for the daughter of the two guests at the castle ; and lastly, he wanted to be told why the big, burly man at the ferry had to carry people over.

The wife said, "No one can ever get a word in edgeways with Bird Greif, my good friend ; he rates everybody. But if you like to try, you may hide under his bed, and when he is sound asleep pull a feather out of his tail. About the other matters I will ask him myself."

When the bird Greif came in at night he said, "Wife, I smell some one in the room."

"You are right," replied the wife. "A man has been here, but he went away just now."

The bird then said no more.

At midnight Hans heard the bird snoring loudly, so he ventured to pull out a feather.

Suddenly the bird woke up and exclaimed, "Wife, I certainly smell a human being, and I am sure I felt some one pulling my tail."

The wife responded, "You must have been dreaming. There *was* a man, as I told you, here, but he went away. He talked about a key to a cash-box which had been lost, and which no one knew where to find."

"Oh, the pack of idiots !" exclaimed Bird Greif ; "the key is under a log in the wood-house behind the door."

"He also said something about some parents who had a sick child they couldn't cure."

"Oh, the fools!" exclaimed Greif; "in the cellar under the stairs a bird has made a nest of her hair. If she gets her hair back she will recover."

"The man said something too about a big, burly fellow carrying people across a ferry, and he wanted to know why he was obliged to do it."

"Oh, the stupid blockhead!" said the bird; "if only he would carry some one as far as the middle and there leave him he need never carry any one else over."

In the morning the bird Greif got up and went out. Hans crept from his hiding-place and was in high glee at having obtained his feather and all the information he wanted.

But the wife repeated all over again what the bird had said, so that he should be sure not to forget, and then Hans started.

First of all he came to the man at the water, who inquired what answer he had brought him from the bird Greif.

Hans replied, "Take me across the water, and I will tell you."

The man carried him to the other side, and then Hans told him that if he dropped some one into the middle he need never carry any one else over.

The man was pleased and said he would carry Hans over again to show his gratitude, but Hans said, "No, thank you; I am on the right side and content to stay there."

Then he arrived next at the castle where the people were whose daughter was ill.

Hans showed them the cellar, and the bird's nest was found, and when the hair was restored to her the girl jumped out of bed quite well. Her father and mother overwhelmed Hans with presents and thanks.

He started off a rich man, and when he came to the castle where they had lost the key he went straight into the wood-house and found it for them.

The master of the castle was so charmed to get it back that he gave Hans a handsome reward.

When Hans put in an appearance before the king with

all his presents and money, the king asked enviously where he had got them all.

Hans told him the bird Greif had given him everything, and then the king thought he should like to make Bird Greif's acquaintance himself. He set out, but when he came to the ferry was dropped into the middle of the water and drowned.

Hans married the princess and became king.

STRONG HANS

Once upon a time a man and his wife lived with their only child, Hans, in an out-of-the-way valley near a forest.

When Hans was about two years old his mother took him out with her for a walk in the forest. She had intended to read to him, but, it being a bright spring day, the child was so delighted with the various coloured flowers, that they wandered far into the forest. Suddenly two robbers who had been hidden in the bushes sprang on them, and seizing them took them into the heart of the forest where, from one year's end to another, no one ever came. The poor woman incessantly implored their captors to let them go, but the robbers were hard-hearted, and, paying no attention to her prayers, compelled them to proceed. After a couple of hours' tedious walking they came to a rock with a door in the face of it. On this the robbers knocked, and it was immediately opened, disclosing a long dark tunnel, through which the robbers and their prisoners passed, until they came to a large cave, which was lighted by a fire burning on the hearth. Around the sides of the cave were hanging swords, knives, and other deadly weapons, which glittered in the firelight. A black table stood in the middle of the room, and round it were seated four more robbers playing at cards. The captain of the robbers, who was sitting at the head of the table, came forward on the arrival of the prisoners, and told the woman not to distress herself, as they had no intention of harming her, and that there would be no difficulty so long as she looked after the housework and kept things straight. She was given some food, and a bed was shown her where she and her child could sleep.

Year after year this imprisonment lasted, until at length Hans grew big and strong. His mother taught him all she knew, and also instructed him out of a book she had found in the cave.

When Hans was nine years old he made a strong club out of a piece of a fir tree, and hid it behind the bed. He then went to his mother and said, "Dear mother, I must and will know who is my father."

His mother remained silent and would not tell him, as she was afraid the news would unsettle him, for she was sure the robbers would not let him go away, though it grieved her very much to think that Hans would not be able to see his father.

At nightfall, when the robbers returned from their dishonest labours, Hans armed himself with his club and said to the captain, "I wish to know who is my father. If you do not tell me I shall knock you down."

At this the captain laughed, and then boxed his ears so hard that Hans rolled under the table. He soon picked himself up, however, without saying anything, but he thought to himself, "I'll wait till next year and then try again. Better luck next time."

When the year had passed Hans got out his club, carefully examined and dusted it, and said, "It's a good strong club," and then waited the robbers' return at night. They on their return drank bottle after bottle of wine until they became sleepy. Hans then fetched his club and went up to the captain and asked him once more where his father was. In reply the captain again knocked him down, but Hans at once got up, and with his club attacked the captain and his comrades, who were quite incapable, with such force that he soon stretched them senseless.

While this was going on his mother had stood in a corner, full of astonishment at his strength and courage, and when it was over Hans went up to her and said, "Now I have indeed done something, and you must tell me about my father."

"Dear Hans," replied his mother, "come, let us look for him until we find him."

While she was taking the key of the entrance from the captain, Hans fetched a large flour-sack, which he filled

with gold and silver and anything else worth taking. After putting this on his shoulder he and his mother left the cave; but what was Hans' delight and how he did open his eyes when he came from the darkness into the daylight and saw the trees and the flowers, the sky and the sun shining on it. He could only stand still and look at it all in amazement. With some little trouble the mother found the way, and after two or three hours' walking they arrived once more at the lonely valley and their little cottage.

The father was sitting in the doorway, and when he recognised his wife and found that Hans was his son, wept for joy, for he had long given them up for dead. Though so young, Hans was already a head taller than his father. They entered the house, and Hans laid his sack upon a seat, but the weight was so great that the seat broke under it, and then the floor gave way, while the house tottered from top to bottom. Finally the sack fell through into the cellar.

"Good gracious!" said the father, "you have ruined the house."

"Don't trouble about that, dear father," said Hans; "there is more than enough in that sack to build a new one."

The father and Hans built a new house. They also bought cattle and land, which they farmed. Hans tilled the fields, and when he ploughed drove the plough with such force that the oxen had scarcely to pull at all.

The next spring Hans said to his father, "You may keep all the money. I will make myself a strong club, as I mean to travel."

As soon as he had finished making his club he started on his travels, and journeyed on till he came to a thick forest. On entering it he heard something creaking and cracking. Looking round he saw a fir-tree that was twisted round like a cord from top to bottom, and raising his eyes he saw that a very big man was twisting it with his hands as if it were a switch.

"Hulloa!" called out Hans. "What are you doing there?"

"Well," answered the man, "yesterday I collected a bundle of twigs, and I want a rope to tie them up."

"This just suits me," thought Hans; "he is a big, strong fellow." So he called out to the man, "Leave that alone and come along with me."

On this the man climbed down, and when he reached the ground he proved to be quite a head taller than Hans, though Hans was by no means short.

"For the future your name shall be Fir-twister," said Hans.

On going some distance farther they heard a knocking that shook the ground, and proceeding in the direction of the sound they came at last upon a giant who was breaking great pieces of stone from an enormous rock with his bare fist.

Hans asked him the meaning of his doing so, and the giant replied, "When I wish to sleep at night I am so worried by bears, wolves, and other wild beasts that are growling and snuffing round that I can get no rest; so I intend to build a house where I can be at peace."

"Good," said Hans, "I can do with him also;" and then he said to the giant, "Leave your house-building alone and come along with me. Your name shall be Rock-breaker."

The giant agreed, and the three then passed on through the forest. The wild beasts that they came across were so terrified at their appearance that they soon ran out of sight.

In the evening they came to an old deserted castle which they entered, and passed the night sleeping in the hall. Next morning Hans went into the neglected garden, which was overgrown with shrubs and branches. Suddenly a wild boar sprang out at him, but quick as lightning Hans dealt him such a blow with his club that the boar fell dead at his feet. Hans then carried the carcase on his shoulders back to the castle, where he dressed the meat himself, which, having been duly spitted and roasted, was thoroughly enjoyed by the three companions.

It was then agreed that, taking it in turns, two out of the three should go out hunting, leaving the third at the castle to cook nine pounds of meat for each of them.

The first day the fir-twister stayed at home, while Hans and the rock-breaker went out in search of game.

While the fir-twister was in the midst of his cooking a

wizened little dwarf made his appearance and asked for some meat.

"Be off with you, you scoundrel!" answered the fir-twister; "you don't need any meat;" but to his surprise the insignificant-looking dwarf flew at him so vigorously with his fists that the fir-twister was soon overcome and finally fell to the ground gasping for breath. Then the dwarf, who was in a great rage, gave him a sound thrashing and went away.

When the hunters returned the fir-twister said nothing about the dwarf or the beating he had received, for he thought that as the other two would be staying at home, they in their turn might try their luck with the little wretch, and chuckled to himself at the idea.

Next day the rock-breaker kept house, and the same thing happened, he also getting a good drubbing from the dwarf for not giving him any meat. When the others returned the fir-twister saw at a glance what had happened, but neither of the two victims said anything, as they intended that Hans should also pay for his supper.

The third day Hans stayed at home and duly did his work in the kitchen, but while he was skimming the broth the dwarf appeared and requested meat. Hans said to himself, "I will give some of my share to the poor creature, and then the others will not run short;" so he gave him a piece of meat, but when this was finished the dwarf asked for more, which the good-natured Hans gave him, for he knew he should still have a little left. But when the dwarf demanded a third helping Hans told him he was getting too bold, and refused to give him any more. The dwarf then tried to serve Hans as he had done the other two, but this time he did not succeed, for Hans, without disconcerting himself, gave him a couple of blows that sent him flying down the castle steps. In trying to follow him Hans fell over him, and on picking himself up he saw that the dwarf was nearly out of sight. Hans rushed after him into the forest, and was just in time to see him disappear in a hole in the ground, so he contented himself with marking the spot and returned home.

His comrades, on their return, were surprised to find him none the worse.

Hans told them his adventures, and then the others told him what had happened to them, at which Hans laughed, and said, "It serves you jolly well right for being so selfish and greedy, but it is a positive disgrace that two such big fellows as you should be beaten by a dwarf."

Having procured a basket and some cord, they proceeded to the pit where the dwarf had disappeared, and by means of the basket and cord they managed to let Hans down to the bottom of it, where he discovered a door in front of him. This he pushed open and entered a chamber, in which was sitting a most beautiful maiden, and near her sat the dwarf, who grinned at him like a Cheshire cat.

The maiden was bound with chains, and looked at Hans so pleadingly that he felt quite sorry for her, and made up his mind to deliver her from the dwarf. So he promptly fell on the latter, and gave him such a blow with his club that he fell down dead. Immediately the chains fell from the maiden, with whose beauty Hans was now thoroughly enraptured. She told him that she was a king's daughter, and that a wicked count, because she had refused to marry him, had stolen her from her home and shut her up in that dark hole in charge of the dwarf, who made her life miserable.

Hans now placed the poor princess in the basket and had her pulled up out of the pit, but when the basket came down again Hans was afraid to trust himself to the tender mercies of his companions, for had they not proved false already in telling him nothing of the dwarf? So he only put his club in the basket, which was well for him, for when the basket got half-way up his two faithless comrades dropped it, and it fell with a thud to the bottom, and of course if Hans had been in it he would certainly have been killed. But the question was, what could he do? There he was, at the bottom of the pit, and think as hard as he could he did not see how he was to get out of it. "It is very hard," he said to himself, "that I should be buried down here."

Walking about, he re-entered the chamber where he had found the maiden, and seeing on the dwarf's finger a glittering ring, he drew it off and put it on his own fingre. As he turned it, in drawing it on, he heard a rustling in

the air over his head. He looked up and saw a spirit floating in the air, who informed him that she was his slave, and requested to know his wishes. At first he was dumbfounded at the apparition, but recovering himself, he told the spirit that he wished to be carried out of the pit. His wishes were at once complied with, and he felt himself, as it were, flying upwards. On reaching *terra firma*, however, he found nobody, nor was there any one in the castle. The fir-twister and the rock-breaker had hurried off, taking with them the beautiful maiden.

Hans then turned once more the ring on his finger, when immediately the spirit appeared and, in reply to his inquiries, told him that the other two were on the sea. Hans then ran till he reached the shore, where, far out at sea, he could just discern his faithless companions in a small boat.

Full of anger he, with his club in his hand, sprang into the water and began to swim, but the weight of his club dragged him down, and he began to sink. Fortunately, however, he remembered just in time to turn the magic ring, on which the spirit appeared and at his request conveyed him at lightning speed to the ship. Swinging his club, he gave his wicked comrades their deserts, and then threw all that was left of them into the water. He found the beautiful maiden on board in a great state of agitation, and hastened to row back with her to the shore, and to deliver her to her parents.

Soon afterwards Hans and the princess were married, and lived happily ever after.

THE PEASANT IN PARADISE

A POOR honest peasant died, and came to the gate of Paradise. At the same time there died a rich, very rich lord, who came there also. Saint Peter appeared with his keys, and opened the gate and let the lord in; but he cannot have seen the peasant, for he left him standing without and shut the gate. The peasant, waiting there, heard the joyous welcome accorded to the rich man, with music and song. When the noise had ceased, Saint Peter came back

and let the poor man in. Now he expected that at his entrance the music and song would begin anew; but everything remained quiet. He was kindly received, and the angels came forward to welcome him; but nobody sang. Then he asked Saint Peter why the music did not sound for him as for the rich man, and if partiality reigned in Paradise as on earth.

"No," answered the saint; "thou art as dear to us as any other, and, like him who hast just come, thou shalt taste the joys of Paradise; but poor peasants like thee come here every day, while rich men arrive only once in a century."

LEAN LIESE

Lean Liese had a very different way of thinking from lazy Heinz and fat Trine, who never disturbed themselves about anything. She worried herself from morning till night, and loaded her husband, tall Lenz, with so much work that he had more to bear than an ass with three panniers. But it was all in vain; they had nothing and they earned nothing.

One night when she lay in bed, every limb aching with fatigue, but still busy with her thoughts, she gave her husband a shove in the side with her elbow and said, "Lenz, do you know what I have been thinking of? If I could find a florin, and somebody were to give me one, and I borrowed a third from some one else, and you gave me another: when I had got the four florins together I should buy a young cow."

This pleased her husband mightily, who said, "I really don't know where I shall get the florin that you expect me to give you, but if you do manage to collect the money, and are able to buy a cow with it, I think it will be a very good idea to carry out your plan. It will be nice," he continued, "when the cow has a calf, as then I shall be able occasionally to refresh myself with a drink of milk."

"The milk will not be for you," said his wife; "we shall let the calf have it, so that it will become strong and fat, and we shall be able to sell it well."

"Certainly," answered the husband, "but if we take a little milk it will not matter."

"Who taught you to meddle with cows?" retorted his wife. "Whether it matters or not I shall not allow it, and even if you stand on your head you shall not get a single drop. You great Lenz, because it is impossible to satisfy you, you intend to eat up what I have such difficulty to earn."

"Woman," cried the husband, "be quiet, or I will give you a slap in the face."

"What? You would threaten me, you glutton, you blackguard, you whipper-snapper!"

She tried to seize him by the hair, but big Lenz jumped up, caught both her thin arms in one hand, and pressed her head down on to the pillow with the other, letting her abuse him as much as she liked, till from sheer fatigue she fell asleep.

Whether the next morning she began to quarrel again, or whether she went out to look for the desired florins, I do not know.

THE FOREST HOUSE

A POOR woodcutter lived with his wife and three daughters in a cottage. One morning before he started to his work he said to his wife, "Let the eldest girl bring my dinner into the forest, and so that she will be sure to find her way I will strew Indian corn as I go, to mark it."

But when the sun was high in the heavens, and the girl started with a can of soup, the field- and wood-sparrows, the blackbirds, larks, and rooks had long ago eaten up the corn. So she went on, guided by chance, till the sun went down and night fell. The trees rustled in the darkness, the owls hooted, and she began to be frightened.

Then she saw a light shining through the trees in the distance. "There people must live," she thought. "They will perhaps take me in for the night." The girl stepped into the dark porch and rapped on the door, for the light came from the window of a small house.

A voice said, "Come in."

She went in and tapped again at the parlour door.

Again the voice said, "Come in."

She opened the door and found a little grey-haired old man sitting by the table, with his face buried in his hands and his long white beard flowing over the table almost on to the floor. By the stove lay three animals—a hen, a cock, and a piebald cow. The girl told the little old man she had been taking her father his dinner and had lost her way, and begged him to give her lodging for the night.

The old man said—

"My pretty cock,
My pretty hen,
And thou,
Dappled cow,
What do you say?"

"Duks," answered the animals; which must have meant, "We have no objection," for the old man said at once to the girl—

"Here is abundance. Go to the hearth and cook our supper."

The girl found in the kitchen plenty of everything, and cooked a good meal, but forgot the animals. She carried the full dishes to the table, sat down beside the old grey man and ate till her hunger was appeased. When she had finished she said, "I am very tired; show me a bed where I can sleep."

"The animals answered—

"You have eaten with him,
And drunk with him,
And never thought of us.
Now see what you'll do for the night."

The old man then said, "Now go upstairs and you'll find a room with two beds in it. Shake them up, put on white sheets, and I will come too, and lay myself to rest."

The girl went upstairs, shook the beds and made them, and lay down in one of them without thinking any more about the old man.

After a time, however, the grey old man came and held the candle over the girl and shook his head. And when

he saw she was sound asleep he opened a trap-door and let her down into the cellar.

The woodcutter went home late that evening and reproached his wife for letting him starve all day.

"I am not to blame," she said. "The girl started with your dinner in good time. She must have lost her way. But she will be sure to come back to-morrow morning."

But the woodcutter got up before it was daylight and asked that the second daughter might bring his dinner. "This time," he said, "I will take a bag of lentils with me They are easier to see than Indian corn, and the girl can't mistake the way."

At dinner time the second girl started, but the lentils had vanished ; the birds and fowls of the air had picked them all up.

The girl walked on and on in the forest till it was night, when she, too, came to the little house of the old grey man and was bidden to come in. When she asked for board and lodgings he again asked the animals—

"My pretty cock,
My pretty hen,
And thou,
Dappled cow,
What do you say?"

The animals answered as before, "Duks," and all happened as it had on the previous day.

The girl cooked a good supper, ate and drank with the old man, and didn't trouble herself about the animals. And when she asked where she was to sleep they said—

"You have eaten with him,
And drunk with him,
And never thought of us."

When the girl was asleep the old man came and looked at her, holding the candle over her, and shaking his head, and then he let her down through the trap-door into the cellar.

On the third morning the woodcutter said to his wife, "To-day send our youngest child with my dinner. She has always been good and obedient, and will keep to the

right path instead of larking about and going astray like her sisters."

The mother objected, saying, "Must I now lose my favourite and youngest child, too?"

"You needn't be afraid of that," answered the father. "She is steady and sensible, and I'll strew the way thick with peas, so that she is positive not to miss it."

But by the time the youngest girl came out with her basket on her arm the wood-pigeons had already made short work of the peas and she didn't know which path to take. She was in great distress, thinking how her mother would fret and her father be dinnerless. At last when it was dark she saw the light and came to the forest house as her sisters had done. She asked in a kind and friendly voice if she might stay the night there, and the little man with the long beard asked his animals as usual—

"My pretty cock,
My pretty hen,
And thou,
Dappled cow,
What do you say?"

"Duks," said the animals.

Then the girl went up to the stove in front of which the beasts lay and caressed "pretty hen" and "pretty cock," stroking their soft plumage with her hand, and she scratched the piebald cow between the horns, and when, at the bidding of the old man, she had cooked an excellent supper, and the dishes were on the table, she said, "Shall I sit down and satisfy myself while those good animals go without? There is plenty of fodder in the kitchen, I'll attend to them before I eat my own supper." So she went out and fetched hemp seed and barley for the cock and hen and an armful of sweet hay for the cow. "There, dear beasts," she said affectionately, "enjoy your supper, and if you are thirsty I'll fetch you a drink." So she then fetched a pail full of water, and the cock and hen sprang on the edge and dipped their beaks in and then held their heads in the air after the manner of birds drinking, and the dappled cow took a long, hearty draught. When the animals had been fed thus the girl sat

down to the table with the old man and ate what he had left for her.

Not long afterwards the cock and hen tucked their heads under her wings and the cow blinked its eyes.

Then the girl said—

"Shall we not go to bed,
My pretty cock,
My pretty hen?
And thou,
My dappled cow,
What do you say?"

The animals replied—

"Duks,
You have eaten with us,
You have drunk with us,
You have been kind and bright,
And we wish you a very good night."

The girl then went upstairs, shook out the feather mattresses and eider-down, put on clean sheets, and when she had done, the old man with the long white beard reaching to his feet came and laid himself in one of the beds. The girl got into the other, said her prayers, and fell asleep.

She slept peacefully till midnight, when there were so many noises in the house that she awoke. In all the corners there was a creaking sound. The doors swung back on their hinges against the walls. The beams groaned as if they were being torn out by the roots, the staircase sounded as if it had collapsed, and the roof cracked just as if it had fallen in. But as all became quiet again and nothing had happened to her, the girl lay quite still and fell sound asleep again.

In the morning when the sun shining in woke her up what a scene met her eyes! She was lying in a spacious apartment adorned with every royal splendour. Tapestry of green silk with golden flowers hung on the walls, her bed was of ivory, the counterpane of red velvet, and on a chair beside her lay a pair of slippers embroidered with pearls.

The girl thought she must be dreaming, but three servants in rich livery came in and asked what her commands were. "Go now," she said, "I will get up and cook the old man his breakfast, and feed the pretty cock and hen and the dear old cow." She supposed the old man had got up before her, and looked round at his bed. In it lay not the old man, but a handsome youth, and while she was looking at him he woke up, raised himself, and said—

"I am a prince, and was bewitched by an old sorceress into the bent little grey old man you saw last night. I was obliged to live in the forest, and no one was allowed to live with me but my three servants in the shape of a cock, a hen, and a piebald cow; and the spell could not be removed till a maiden came whose heart was so kind that she was not only amiable towards myself but to the animals too. And you are she. Last night at midnight release came, and the old forest house changed again into my royal palace."

And when they were both up and dressed the prince ordered his three servants to go and fetch the maiden's parents to their wedding.

"But where are my two sisters?" she asked.

"I have shut them in the cellar," was the answer, "and to-morrow they shall be led into the forest and take places as maid-servants at a collier's, where they shall stay till their manners have improved, and they have learnt to be kind to animals and not let them starve."

"FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE"

THERE was once a tailor who was a cantankerous man, and his wife, who was a good, industrious, pious woman, could never satisfy him. He was displeased with everything she did, grumbled, scolded, and beat her.

When the magistrates heard of his ill-treatment of her they had him brought up and sentenced him to a term of imprisonment. He lived on bread and water for some weeks, and then was let out after he had been made to swear he would not beat his wife any more, but live with

her peaceably "for better or for worse" as all married folks should.

For a time things went smoothly, then the husband went back to his old ways, was sulky and quarrelsome, and because he might not beat his wife he caught her by the hair and shook her. The wife escaped into the garden, but he ran after her with the yard measure and scissors and chased her round and round. Anything that came handy he picked up and hurled at her. If he hit her he laughed, if he missed he stormed and raved. He went on in this manner so long that at last the neighbours felt bound to interfere and come to the wife's rescue. The tailor was again had up before the magistrates and reminded of his promise to keep the peace.

"Gentlemen," he answered, "I have kept my word. I haven't beaten her, and I have shared things for better and for worse with her."

"How is that possible," inquired the judge, "when such grave charges are brought against you?"

"I did not beat her, gentlemen. I was merely going to comb her hair with my hand when she wriggled away and ran off. I followed her to remind her of her duty, and to emphasise my words I may have taken the first thing that came to hand to throw at her. As often as I hit her it was better for me and worse for her, and so often as I missed it was better for her and worse for me. So we are quits."

The judges were not satisfied with this answer and ordered him to pay his fine.

THE WREN (HEDGE-KING)

In the olden times every sound had a meaning and signified something. When the smith's hammer echoed on the forge it called, "*Smith me, to! Smith me, to!*" and when the carpenter's saw scraped it said, "*Thou hast; thou hast.*" When the wheel of the mill began to flap it said, "Help, dear Lord, help;" and if the miller was careless and left the mill it would speak high German and say, "Who is there? Who is there?" and then answer very quickly,

'The miller; the miller;" and at last as fast as lightning, 'Bravely, bravely; a sixth of an eighth."

At this time the birds had a language of their own that every one understood. Now it sounds only like twittering and piping, or to some like music without words.

It occurred to the birds then that they would rather not be all equal, and that from amongst them they would choose a king. Only the peewit was against the idea. He had lived a free life and said he would die free, and flying distractedly hither and thither he cried, "Woe, woe." He then retired to some remote marshes and was not seen again among his contemporaries.

The birds now wished to take the matter into serious consideration, and on a brilliant morning in May they assembled from all parts of the woods and fields to hold their conference—eagles and bullfinches, owls and crows, larks and sparrows, but how can I enumerate them all? Even the cuckoo and the wild-hop (called his parish clerk, because he always preceded the cuckoo by a day or two) came, and a little bird, who as yet had no name, mixed with the crowd. The hen who by some accident had heard nothing at all about the affair marvelled greatly at the huge assembly.

"What, what, what does it all mean?" she cuckled excitedly. "What, what——"

The cock soothed her and said, "I'll explain it all to you."

It was resolved that the bird who was chosen king should be able to fly higher than other birds.

A green frog sitting in the bushes croaked warningly, "Natt, natt, natt," because he thought this would lead to trouble and the shedding of many tears.

But the crow said "Quark-ok; it shall all be settled peacefully."

All the birds therefore were to pass their flying examination on this lovely morning, so that none of them should be able to make excuses like the following—"In the morning I could have flown much higher, but in the evening I was tired out."

At a given signal the whole army rose at once into the air. The dust was lifted too in a cloud from the fields, and

there was a mighty rustling and fluttering and flapping of wings. The effect was that of a monstrous black cloud moving in the air. The small birds soon gave up and fell back on the earth. The bigger birds made gallant efforts, but not one of them could compete with the eagle, who soared so high that he could have pecked out the eyes of the sun if he had liked. When he saw the others were miles behind he thought, "What is the good of flying any higher? I am undeniably the king," and he began slowly to descend.

All the birds below cheered and cried eagerly, "You must be king. Not one of us could fly half as high as you."

"Except me," screamed the small fellow without a name, who had, unseen, hidden himself in the eagle's breast. And as he wasn't tired, but as fresh as paint, he flew up and up and reached such a height that he could touch the angels in heaven. He then dropped his wings and sank through the air till he was down again. Then he said in his penetrating little voice, "King am I! King am I!"

"*You* our king!" cried the other birds wrathfully. "You have won through cheating, and have tricked us." And they forthwith made another condition, and that was that only the bird should be king who could fly farthest *under* the earth. How the goose expanded her broad breast and strutted about! How quickly the hen scraped a hole! The duck sprang into a deep ditch, sprained both its ankles, and waddled painfully to the nearest pond, giving a doleful "Quack, quack." The little nameless bird, however, looked for a mouse's hole, squeezed into it, and screamed in his small piping voice, "King am I! King am I!"

"*You* our king, indeed!" all the birds said in a scornful chorus. "You have accomplished your purpose by swindling." And they decided to keep him a prisoner in his mouse-hole and to starve him out. The owl was stationed as sentinel before the hole, and told not to let the rascal escape on pain of death. When evening came, and the whole feathered tribe, worn out with the day's exertions, retired to bed, the owl alone remained up, watching the mouse-hole with his great eyes. He too became weary,

and thought, "You may without harm shut one eye and keep the other open, so that the little rogue doesn't get out of his hole." Accordingly he closed one eye and stared at the mouse-hole with the other. The little chap poked out his head now and then with the intention of wriggling away, but the owl was always there to take him into custody. At last the owl changed the eye he had been keeping watch with, shut it, and opened the other. He intended to do this all the night through, but once when he shut his tired eye he forgot to open the one that had been resting, and directly both eyes were shut together he fell asleep. The little prisoner saw his chance and slipped out.

From that time the owl was never allowed to see in the daytime, otherwise the rest of the birds would have torn his skin off his back. He only flew out when other birds slept, and he hated and persecuted the mice because they made such awkward holes. After that, too, the nameless little bird was afraid to show himself much, for fear he should be caught and whipped. So he hopped about in the hedges, and when he feels quite safe he calls sometimes even now, "King am I," and so the other birds speak of him in derision as the hedge-king. No one was more pleased than the ambitious, soaring lark not to have to swear allegiance to the hedge-king.

THE SOLE

Once upon a time the fishes became discontented because there was no order kept in their dominions. No one would turn aside for the others, but each one swam on just as he chose, separating those who were in conversation together, and pushing them on one side; and the stronger ones hit out at the weaker with their tails, and made them get out of the way at a fine rate, or else ate them up. Then the fishes thought, "How capital it would be if we had a king who could be judge over us!" and so at last they assembled to choose a ruler, and it was to be he who could swim quickest, so as to come and help the weaker fishes.

So they all drew up in a row by the shore, and the pike started them with a flap of his tail, and away they all went.

Off darted the pike like an arrow, closely followed by the herring, the gudgeon, the carp, the perch, and the rest of them. Even the sole swam among them, hoping to get the prize.

All at once there arose a cry, "The herring is first! the herring is first!"

"Who is first?" asked the flat, envious sole—"who is first?"

"The herring! the herring!" was the answer.

"Yah! the naked herring; yah, bah, the naked herring!" cried the sole, disdainfully. And ever since the sole's mouth has been all on one side as a punishment for his ill-nature.

"EXTREMES TO BE AVOIDED"

"WHERE do you like best to feed your cattle?" some one once asked an old cowherd.

"Here, sir, where the grass is not too rich and not too thin, otherwise it wouldn't be good."

"Why not?" asked the gentleman.

"Listen. Don't you hear that subdued cry down in the meadow?" said the cowherd. "That is the moorhen who was once a cowherd, and the wild-hop who was one too. I will tell you the story—

"The moorhen fed his herds on rich green meadows where an abundance of flowers grew, and this made his cows wild and defiant. The wild-hop, on the contrary, drove his cattle up barren mountain sides, and his cows became lean and weak. When evening came, and the cowherds drove their animals home, moorhen couldn't manage his, they were so spirited, and would jump about and go astray. He called 'Dapple' (meaning dappled cow), 'Dapple, come here!' but in vain. Wild-hop, on the other hand, couldn't get his cows to stand on their legs, they had become so weak and spiritless. 'Up, up with you!' he cried, but they remained lying on the sand. So, you see, that's what comes of going to extremes. Now, when they no longer keep cows, moorhen still shouts, 'Dapple, come here'; and wild-hop, 'Up, up, up!'"

THE OWL

About two hundred years ago, when people weren't nearly so clever and sharp as they are nowadays, a curious thing happened in a certain small town. One of those large owls of the kind called eagle-owls came from a neighbouring forest and took refuge for the night in the barn of a citizen, and when morning came it was afraid, on account of the other birds, to emerge into daylight. When the groom came to fetch straw from the barn he was terrified at the sight of the owl roosting in a corner, and ran off to inform his master that a monster, the like of which he had never seen before, was rolling its eyes in his barn, and would probably devour any one who came near it.

"I know what you are," said his master. "You have courage enough to chase a blackbird in the fields, but if you see a hen lying dead in the yard you fetch a stick before you dare come near it. I must come and see myself what this monster is you describe."

The master swaggered quite bravely up to the barn and looked in. However, on seeing with his own eyes the terrible-looking animal, he was not less alarmed than his servant. With a few bounds he retreated, ran to his neighbours, and implored their assistance against an unknown and dangerous creature; if they did not give it the whole town would be imperilled should the brute escape from the barn. A great hubbub and excitement now arose in the streets; all the citizens came armed with hayrakes, pitchforks, and axes, and at last the civic functionaries and the burgomaster came out, and falling into a procession in the market-place, arrived at the barn. One of the most plucky of the party looked in, and screaming, withdrew, pale as death. Two others ventured in, but with the same result.

Then a big, brawny, muscular fellow, who was celebrated for his feats of daring in the war, came forward and said, "You cannot rout the animal by merely looking at it. Here is a case for action. You all appear to have turned into chicken-hearted women."

He ordered them to bring him a breastplate and sword, and armed himself. Every one praised him for his pluck

and courage, though many had fears that his life would be sacrificed. The two barndoors were opened, and the owl was seen to have come out of its corner and perched itself on a beam. The daring fellow asked for a ladder, and as he placed it and prepared to ascend every one called out to him to keep cool, and to behave like a man, and to remember how St. George had killed the dragon. When he had reached nearly the top of the ladder, and the owl saw what his intentions were, and being confused at the crowd and the noise, it rolled its eyes, preened its plumage, and set up a ghastly shriek, snapping with its beak in a threatening manner.

"Strike, strike!" roared the crowd of onlookers.

"Let some one come and stand in my shoes," said the gallant, "and I'll wager he won't shout out strike." He put his foot one rung higher, and then he began to tremble and shake, and half-fainting, came down the ladder again.

Now there was no one else left likely to risk his neck in the encounter. "The strongest man amongst us," they said, "has been poisoned by the breath of the monster. Shall we give it a chance of injuring any more of us?"

Then they held a consultation as to what steps had better be taken to save the town. For a long time every suggestion seemed useless, till finally the burgomaster thought of a plan.

"In my opinion," he said, "we should, for the common good and public welfare, pay the owner of the barn the value of his straw, hay, and corn, and then set fire to the building, and let it burn to the ground with the terrible creature in it. There is no time to parley, so let the deed be done."

All agreed to the burgomaster's proposal. The barn was set alight at its four corners, and it and the owl were burnt to ashes. Whoever doesn't believe it may go and inquire into the truth of the story.

THE MOON

Long, long ago there was a country where the nights were always dark and the sky inky black. Then the moon never rose there, and no stars twinkled in the firmament. At the

creation of the world the great night light had given out, and not enough was left for this country. Here four young fellows once started on their travels and came to another kingdom, where in the evening, when the sun sank behind the mountains, a great silver ball appeared over an oak tree and shed a soft radiance far and wide. One could see everything by it, though it did not give such a dazzling light as the sun. The wanderers stood still and asked a peasant who drove his waggon along the road what the light was.

"That is the moon," he answered. "Our magistrate bought it for three florins and had it stuck on that tree. He is obliged to pour fresh oil in and clean it out every day so that it shall always burn brightly. For this he is paid a florin a week."

When the peasant was out of sight one of them said, "This lamp may be useful to us. At home we have an oak tree as big as that one where we might hang it up. What a delightful thing not to have to stumble about in the dark at night!"

"Do you know," said the second, "what we'll do? We'll get a horse and cart and carry the moon away with us. Here they will be able to buy another."

"I am a good climber," said the third, "let me get it."

The fourth hired a cart and horses, and the third climbed the tree, bored a hole in the moon, put a string through it, and dragged it down. As the lustrous ball lay in the cart they covered it with a cloth so that no one should remark the theft. They brought it triumphantly into their own country, and placed it on the top of an oak tree. Old and young rejoiced over the new lamp which spread its radiance in the fields and filled attics and parlours with its silvery light. The dwarfs came out of their caves in the rocks, and the small goblins danced in circles on the meadows, wearing their best scarlet coats.

The four youths filled the moon with oil, trimmed the wick, and received a florin every week for their trouble. But in course of time they grew into old men, and when one fell sick, and his death was not far off, he ordered that a fourth part of the moon, his property, should be buried with him in the grave. So when he was dead the magis-

trate stood on the tree and hacked off a quarter, which was laid in the coffin. The light the moon now gave was fainter, but not remarkably so. Then the second of the four died, and a second quarter was cut off ; and when the third died and took his share the light became unmistakably weaker. The fourth died and was buried, and then the old darkness reigned again. When the folks went out at night without lanterns they knocked against each other and fell head over heels.

However, the four quarters of the moon joined again in the nether world, and as it had always been dark there before the unusual light disturbed the dead and awoke them out of their sleep, they were astonished that they could see distinctly. They got up, became lively and active, and were again living creatures. Some went to dances or to the play, others hastened to the inns, where they asked for wine, got drunk, quarrelled, and fought. The noise they made grew worse and worse, and at last reached heaven. St. Peter, who guarded the gate of Paradise, thought there was a revolution in the lower world, and called out the heavenly armies to repulse the attack of the evil enemy and drive them back. But as they didn't come he mounted his charger, rode out at the gate, and down into the lower world. There he quieted and soothed the dead so that they returned to their graves, and he took the moon away with him and hung it up in heaven.

THE SPAN OF LIFE

When God created the world and settled how long every creature was to live, the donkey came and asked, "Master, how long shall I live ?"

"Thirty years," God answered. "Does that suit you ?"

"Yes, Master," answered the donkey. "It is long enough. Think of my hard life, bearing heavy burdens from morning till night, dragging sacks of corn to the mill so that others may have bread to eat, and with nothing but blows and kicks to refresh me in return. Let me off some of the time."

God had compassion on him and gave him eighteen

years instead of thirty. The donkey went away comforted, and the dog appeared.

"How long do you wish to live?" asked the Creator. "The donkey thought thirty years too much; would you be content with that?"

"Master," said the dog, "I hope you don't mean it. Think how far I have to run. My feet could not wear so long, and when I have lost the voice to bark and the teeth to bite with, there is nothing left for me to do but lie in a corner and to growl."

God saw the justice of his plea and allotted him twelve years. Then the monkey came.

"You will probably like to live thirty years?" said the Master to him. "You haven't got to work like the donkey and the dog, and your life is an amusing one."

"Oh, Master," he answered, "so it appears, but that is not really the case. If barley-milk rains I have no spoon. I have to be always playing tricks and pulling grimaces to make people laugh, and if they give me an apple and I bite it, it is always sour. How often sadness lies behind a joke! I could not stand it for thirty years."

God saw his point, and graciously shortened his life to ten years. Last of all a man came, radiant, healthy, and fresh, and begged God to say how long he should live.

"Thirty years," said the Master. "Is that enough?"

"What a short time!" cried the man in dismay. "Just when I have built my house and the fire burns on my own hearth, when I have planted trees that blossom and are beginning to bear fruit, and I propose to enjoy the fruits of my labours, *then* I must die. Oh, Master, lengthen my days."

"I will give you the donkey's eighteen years in addition," said God.

"That is not enough," answered the man.

"You shall have the dog's twelve years too."

"Still too little."

"Very well, then," said God, "you shall have the monkey's ten years, but no more."

The man went away, hardly content yet.

Thus man lives seventy years. The first thirty are those of his adolescence and prime, and they pass quickly; in

them he is healthy and merry, and works with spirit and enjoys existence. Then follow the donkey's eighteen years, when one burden after another is laid on his shoulders, and he has to carry the corn that others eat, and gets more kicks than halfpence in return. Next comes the dog's twelve years, when he lies in the corners and growls, with no voice to bark and no teeth to bite. And when this period is over comes, last of all, the monkey's ten years. In them man is light-headed and silly; he does all sorts of absurd tricks and is the sport of children.

DEATH'S MESSENGERS

In the olden times a giant was one day strolling on the high road, when an unknown man suddenly sprang in front of him and shouted, "Halt! not one step further."

"What!" said the giant, "an atom like you, that I could crush to powder between my fingers. You dare to bar the way. Who are you to speak in this impertinent manner?"

"I am Death," was the answer. "No one resists me to any purpose. All must obey my commands."

The giant, however, wouldn't yield, and began to wrestle with Death. It was a long and violent conflict. At last the giant got the upper hand, and felled Death with his fist. He sank down on a stone, and the giant went his way. Death lay helpless and prostrate, and could not get up. "What will happen," he thought, "if I stay here in this corner? No one in the world will die any more, and there will be no standing room if every one lives."

Just then a young man came along beaming with happiness and bursting with health; he was singing and whistling. When he espied the half-fainting man by the roadside he came to him full of compassion, took a bottle of spirits from his pocket, administered the drink, and then waited till he revived.

"Do you know who I am?" asked the wayfarer, as he rose to his feet. "You will be surprised to hear who it is you have restored to health."

"No; I don't know in the least who you may be," the youth answered.

"I am Death," said the man. "I spare nobody, and cannot make an exception even in your favour. But in order to show my gratitude, I will promise not to take you unawares, but to send my messengers to prepare you before I come and take you away."

"Very well," said the youth, "that is certainly an advantage, for I shall know that I am safe meanwhile." He said "goodbye," and walked on. He prospered, and was always in good spirits. But youth and health gave out at last; sickness and pain came, that plagued him by day and deprived him of his rest by night. "I can't be going to die," he said to himself, "for Death promised to send his messengers to prepare me. How I wish this wearisome illness would pass off!" And when he began to feel stronger his enjoyment in life returned. Then one day some one tapped him on the shoulder: he looked round and saw Death standing behind him.

"Come with me," he said, "it is time for you to take leave of the world."

"What!" exclaimed the man, "are you going to break your word? You promised me you would send your messengers first; but I have seen nothing of them."

"Silence!" Death commanded, "have I not sent you one messenger after another? Did not fever come and consume and prostrate you? Did not giddiness stupefy your head? Were not all your limbs racked with pain? Wasn't there a roaring in your ears? Didn't every tooth in your jaws ache, and a mist spread before your eyes? And besides all these signs, did not my gentle brother sleep remind you of me every night? Did you not lie sometimes in a slumber that resembled death?"

The man had nothing to say, but yielded to his fate and followed death.

MASTER PFRIEM

Master-Pfriem was a small, lean, but lively, restless man, who was never still a moment. His face, out of which a sharp, long nose protruded, was pox-marked and scarred, his hair was grey and stubbly, his eyes small and always

moving from side to side. He noticed everything, blamed everybody, knew better than any one, and was always right. When he was in the street he swung his arms so violently that he once hit a girl who was carrying water by mistake, and jerked her pail till the water spurted, not only all over her, but over him as well. "Stupid!" he cried, shaking himself, "could not you see I was coming behind?" By trade he was a cobbler, and when he was at work he drew his needle and thread out with such a will that every one who didn't keep at a distance was struck in the face by his fist. No apprentice could put up with him for more than a month, for he had always some fault to find with the neatest work. Either the stitches were not even, one shoe was longer than the other, or one heel higher, "Wait a minute," he would say to the apprentices, "and let me show you how to make a skin flexible," and he would take his strap and give them a couple of strokes on the back. He called every one of them lazy and good-for-nothing. He himself did not get through much work, for he was never still for many minutes together. If his wife got up early and lit the fire, he would jump out of bed and run barefoot into the kitchen. "Are you going to set the house on fire?" he would scream, "that fire is big enough to roast an ox by; one would think wood didn't cost money." On washing days when the servant girls laughed and chatted round the tub he would scold them and say, "There stand a parcel of geese, cackling and forgetting their work to gossip. Why use all that fresh soap? Sinful waste and disgraceful laziness. They want to spare their hands, and do not rub the things properly." He turned on his heel in disgust, and as he was flying off knocked over a bucket with his foot, so that the whole kitchen was flooded.

When a new house was being built opposite he ran and watched from the window, cavilling all the time. "Again they are using that red sandstone," he said, "which never dries properly. No one who lives in that house will enjoy good health. And just look how shockingly the boys are laying the stones; their mortar isn't good for any thing. It should be made of gravel, not sand. I shall live to see that house fall over its inhabitants' ears."

He seated himself and put in a few stitches, then he sprang up, snatched off his leather apron, and exclaimed, "I'll just go over and talk to the workpeople and show them their business!"

He came on the carpenters, "What is the meaning of this?" he cried. "You are not sawing according to the line. Those rafters won't be straight."

He tore an axe out of one of the carpenter's hands, and proceeded to show him the right way to use it; but just then a cartload of clay was being driven up, and he threw away the axe, and attacked the peasant at the horses' head.

"You can't be right in your mind," he said. "The idea of harnessing such young horses to so heavy a cartload. The poor animals will be dropping at your feet in a minute."

The driver didn't answer, and Pfriem, greatly offended, rushed back to his workshop.

As he was going to seat himself at his work, the apprentice handed him a shoe.

"What's that again?" he yelled at him. "Haven't I told you a hundred times not to cut the shoes away so much? Who would buy a shoe like that when it's nearly all sole? I desire that my instructions shall be carried out to the letter."

"Master," answered the apprentice, "you may be right in complaining of the shape of the shoe. But it is the very one you cut out yourself. You were working at it when you jumped up to go out, and I have merely picked it up. Not an angel in heaven could make it any different."

One night Master Pfriem dreamed he was dead, and on his way to heaven. When he got there he knocked loudly at the gate. "I am surprised," he said, "that they haven't a bell here; one will knock all the skin off one's knuckles at this rate."

The Apostle Peter opened the gate to see who was so impatiently demanding admittance. "Ah, so it is you, is it, Master Pfriem?" he said. "I will let you in, but remember that you must drop your habit here of picking holes in everything. In heaven that won't do."

"You might have spared yourself the trouble of warn-

ing me," answered Pfriem. "I know what is seemly, and here, thank God, everything is perfect, and there can be nothing to find fault with as there is on earth."

He walked in, and as he wandered about in the spacious halls of heaven, he looked round him in his usual critical way, shook his head now and then, or muttered something to himself.

Then he saw two angels carrying off a beam. It was the beam some one had had in his own eye when he had been looking for the mote in others'. The angels carried the beam upright instead of horizontally.

"What a ridiculous thing to do!" thought Master Pfriem; but he was silent, and contented himself with reflecting, "After all, it doesn't signify how a beam is carried, and I see there is no danger of running into anything as they do it."

Soon afterwards he caught sight of two angels filling a bucket at a spring with water. The bucket leaked and the water streamed out in all directions. "Gracious!" he burst out, but checked himself in time, and thought, "They are doing it for a joke, and there is no harm in playing these sort of games when once one is in heaven, where, I notice, people have nothing to do."

He went on and saw a waggon stuck fast in a rut. "No wonder you've come to grief," said Pfriem to the man standing by it, "when you have loaded your cart in that unreasonable fashion. What have you got there?"

"Pious wishes," answered the man. "I could not bring them by the right road. But they won't let me stick here for ever." And as he spoke an angel actually came and put two horses into the shafts.

"Very good," said Pfriem, "but two horses won't do it. Four at least are wanted."

Another angel came up with two more horses, but harnessed them behind the cart instead of in front.

This was too much for Master Pfriem. "Fiddle-de-dee!" he burst out. "What on earth are you doing? Never in my life did I ever see any one attempt to drag a cart up from behind. But you in your blatant conceit think you know better than I, don't you?"

He wanted to say more, but one of heaven's inhabitants

caught him by the collar, and shoved him with great force out at the gates.

Outside the master turned his head to have one more look at the cart, and saw it drawn with one spring up a hill by four winged horses.

At this moment Master Pfriem awoke. "Things are pretty much the same in heaven as here," he meditated, "one can of course excuse a great deal there, but the idea of harnessing horses in front and at the back of a cart too! They had wings, it is true, but who was to know that? Besides, what a piece of absurdity to give horses with four legs wings too! But I must get up now, or they'll be turning the house upside down. It is really fortunate that I am not dead after all."

THE GOOSE-GIRL AT THE WELL

THERE was once an old, old woman, almost as old as the hills, who lived with her flock of geese in a wilderness between two mountains, where she had a small house. The wilderness was surrounded by a dense forest, and every morning the old woman took her crutches and stumped into the forest. Here she was more active than you would have imagined such a very old woman could be. She gathered grasses for her geese, picked as many wild berries as she could reach with her hands, and carried it all home on her back. One would have thought the heavy burden would have weighed her down to the earth, but she always arrived home with it safely. If she met any one she greeted him quite in a friendly manner, saying, "Good morning, my friend. Lovely weather to-day. You wonder at my bundle of grass, but every one must bear a burden." People, in spite of her cheerful words, did not like meeting her and went a long way round to avoid her; and if a father passed her with his boys he would whisper, "Take care, the old woman has thistle-down behind her ears. She is a witch."

One morning a fine young stripling came tramping through the forest. The sun shone brightly, the birds sang, and a soft, cool breeze stirred the foliage. The

young man felt happy and gay. So far he had met no one, and then suddenly he saw the old crone kneeling on the ground mowing her grasses with a scythe. She had stuffed a large bundle in her satchel and two baskets stood near filled with wild pears and crab-apples.

"Mother," said he, "you'll never be able to carry all that."

"I must carry it all, pretty gentleman," she said. "Rich people's children wouldn't need such things. But the poor peasant has a saying—

'Be careful of the odds and ends.'

Would you like to help me?" she went on, as he stood beside her. "You have a straight back and young legs; it will be easy work for you; and my house isn't very far off, it is behind yonder mountain, built on a heath. How quickly you could get there!"

The young man felt sorry for the old woman. "My father is no peasant," he said. "I am the son of a rich count; but to show that it is not only peasants who can carry heavy burdens I will take your bundle."

"If you'll only try," said the old woman, "I shall indeed be grateful. It's about an hour's walk, and you'll have to take the pears and apples too."

The young count was a little dismayed when he heard what the distance was, but the old woman was not going to let him off. She bound the bundle of grass on his back and slung the baskets on his arm.

"You see," she said, "how easy it is."

"No," replied the count, "it is not easy," and his expression became pained; "the bundle is as heavy as if it were choke-full of rocking-stones, and the apples and pears are as weighty as if they were made of lead. I can scarcely breathe."

He wanted to free himself of his burdens in a few minutes, but the old crone wouldn't allow him to rest.

"Look now!" she exclaimed in a mocking voice, "the fine young gentleman can't carry what an old woman has borne on her back a hundred times. Words are all very fine, but when it comes to doing it's different, isn't it?

What are you standing still for? No one is going to relieve you of the bundle; don't think it!"

So long as the way lay over level ground he could endure it, but when they came to the mountain-side and had to climb it, and the loose stones rolled about under his feet as if they were alive, his strength was almost exhausted. Perspiration poured off his brow and hot and cold shivers ran down his back.

"Mother," he said, "I can't go on. I must rest a little."

"Nothing of the kind," said the relentless witch; "when we get home you shall rest, not before. So push on; the exercise will do you a great deal of good."

"You shameless old hag!" exclaimed the count, and tried to throw off the bundle, but in vain, for it was so firmly fastened to his shoulders it might have grown there. He wriggled and shook himself, but could not cast it off.

The old woman laughed heartily at his attempts and danced round him on her crutches.

"Don't lose your temper, pretty sir," she said, "you are getting as red in the face as a turkey-cock. Carry your bundle patiently, and when we get home I'll give you your reward."

What could he do? He was obliged to trudge on and resign himself to the old creature's tyranny. She seemed to grow more and more nimble, while he was weighed down more than ever to the earth. Once with a spring she leapt on to the top of the bundle, and though she was shrivelled and thin as a broomstick her weight exceeded that of the most buxom peasant girl. The youth's knees trembled and bent under him, but the old woman drove him on with a switch and kicks on the legs. Under pressure he arrived at last at the old woman's house ready to drop from fatigue.

When the geese saw the old woman they spread their wings, craned their necks, and flew towards her, crying, "Wulle! wulle!" Behind the flock came a strapping lass with a stick in her hand. Tall and muscular, she was as ugly as darkness itself.

"Mistress Motherkins," she said to the old woman, "what a long time you've been gone! Has anything happened?"

"Happened? No, my daughter," was the response. "That is to say, nothing bad. On the contrary, this kind gentleman has carried my load for me; and not only that, he took me myself, as you see, on his back some of the way. The time passed quickly enough, for we had such fun chatting and joking together as we came along."

The old woman now clambered down from her perch and relieved the count of the bundle and the baskets. She looked at him with quite friendly eyes and said in a suave tone, "Sit down on that bench, and you shall have the reward and refreshment you have so honestly earned." Then she turned to the goose-girl and said, "Go into the house, dearest daughter; it won't do for you to be alone with a young, good-looking gentleman, he might fall in love with you."

The count hardly knew whether to laugh or cry. "Such a beauty as that!" he thought. "Even if she were thirty years younger I shouldn't look at her."

Meanwhile the old woman caressed and stroked her geese as if they had been babies, and then followed her daughter into the house.

The youth stretched himself out on a bench in the shade of an apple-tree. The air was soft and cool. Round him stretched a green meadow thickly carpeted with cowslips, wild thyme, and a thousand other flowers. A clear stream, on which the sun shone, gurgled through the meadow, and the white geese promenaded up and down or plumed themselves in the water.

"It is very charming here," the count said, "but I am so fagged I can't keep my eyes open. I'll take a nap. No fear of the wind blowing me away while I sleep; my legs feel weighted with iron."

After he had been asleep a short while the old woman came and shook him.

"Get up," she said. "You mustn't stay here. I've given you a bad time of it, truly, but it hasn't cost you your life. Here's your reward. You are in no need of money or land, so I give you this." She handed him a small box carved out of an emerald. "Take care of it," she said, "it will bring you happiness."

The count sprang to his feet, conscious that his weariness

had fled and that he was as strong and fit as ever. He thanked the old woman for her present, and without turning his head to get another glimpse of the fair daughter he departed. He had gone some way when he still heard the geese cackling lustily. The count wandered for three days before he found the way out of the wilderness. Then he came to a great town, and as no one knew him he was led to the royal castle, where the king and queen sat on the throne. The count dropped on one knee, drew out the emerald box, and laid it at the feet of the queen.

She bid him rise and give the knick-knack into her hands. Scarcely had she opened it and looked inside than she fell to the ground in a dead faint.

The count was instantly taken into custody by the lackeys and led to prison.

Thereupon the queen opened her eyes and cried, "Let him come back," and then she ordered every one to go away and leave her alone to have a private conversation with the stranger.

When the queen was alone with him she began to cry bitterly. "Of what avail is all this pomp and splendour when every morning I wake up full of care and sorrow? I have had three daughters, the youngest of whom was a miracle of loveliness. She was as white as snow, as pink as apple-blossoms, and her hair shone like sunbeams. When she cried she shed tears that were pearls and precious stones. The king, when she was fifteen years old, ordered all three daughters to come before the throne. You should have seen the admiration of the courtiers when the youngest came in; it was like the sun rising. The king said, 'My daughter, I do not know when my end may come, but I will decide to-day what each of you shall have at my death. You all love me, but the one of you who loves me the most shall have the largest share.' Each daughter said she loved him best. 'Cannot you express,' asked the king, 'how much you love me, and then I shall be able to judge?' The eldest said, 'I love my father more than sweet honey;' the second, 'I love my father more than my prettiest frock.' But the youngest was silent. 'And you, my dearest child,' asked her father, 'how much do you love me?' 'I do not know,' she answered, 'and

cannot compare my love with anything.' But the king insisted that she must mention something. So she said at last, 'The best dishes have no flavour without salt. I love my father as much as I love salt.' When the king heard this answer he became furiously angry and said, 'If your love for me resembles nothing better than salt it shall be rewarded with salt.' Thereupon he divided his kingdom between the two elder daughters, but the youngest, with a sack of salt tied to her back, was led out into the wild forest by two servants and left there alone. We all begged and intervened for her," said the queen, "but nothing could turn the anger of the king. How she wept when she was forced to leave us! The whole path was strewn with pearls as she went. Soon afterwards the king repented his great severity and harshness, and sent people out to look for her in the forest, but she was nowhere to be found. When I think of how she has probably been devoured by wild beasts I can scarcely contain myself for grief. Sometimes I console myself with the hope that she may be hidden in some cave, or living under the protection of some kindhearted people. Imagine my feelings when I opened the emerald box to see a pearl lying in it exactly like one of my daughter's tears. Please tell me how you came by this treasure."

The count related how the old woman in the wood had given it to him. He believed her to be a witch. Of the queen's lost daughter he had heard and seen nothing.

The king and queen then resolved to look up the old woman, for they naturally thought that in the same quarter as the pearl had come from news of their child might be gleaned.

The old woman was sitting in her house in the wilderness at her spinning-wheel, spinning. It was already dark, and a log on a smouldering hearth gave but a feeble light. Suddenly there was a fluttering and cackling without, and the geese were driven home from the meadow. In a few minutes her daughter came in. The old woman scarcely noticed her, and shook her palsied head. The daughter sat down, took her spinning-wheel too, and made it hum,

as young women do the threads flying. Thus they sat together for two hours without speaking a single word.

At last something rattled the window and two fiery eyes glowered through the pane. It was an old screech-owl, and its "Tit wit-hoo" made the old dame look up and say, "Now, daughter, it's time, go out to your work."

She stood up and went out. Where did she go? Over the meadows, on and on till she came into the valley. She stopped by a well where three oak-trees grew. The moon meanwhile had risen in a great silver ball over the mountains. It was so light you could have found a pin. The girl drew a mask off her face and began to wash in the well. When she had finished she threw the skin she had washed off in the water and lay down on the grass to dry in the moonlight. You never saw such a transformation. Instead of a mud-coloured plait, gold locks like sunbeams broke loose from the girl's head and spread round her till they enveloped her whole figure like a mantle. Her eyes shone through her tresses like stars in the sky, and her cheeks bloomed with the soft pink of the apple-blossom. But the beautiful maiden was sad; she sat down and cried bitterly, and one tear after another splashed through her hair on to the ground. There she sat, and would have sat a long time had not the bushes crackled and snapped behind her. She sprang up like a deer at the sound of the sportsman's shot. Just then a black cloud covered the moon, and the girl had again slipped into the old dark skin and disappeared like a light blown out by the wind.

Trembling all over like an aspen leaf she ran into the house again. The old woman stood at the door, and the girl was going to tell her what had happened when the witch laughed gaily and said she knew all about it. She went into the parlour and threw on another log. But she did not sit down again to her spinning-wheel, but fetched a broom and began to sweep and dust.

"Everything must be clean and tidy," she remarked to the girl.

"But, mother," said the girl, "why do you begin to work at such a late hour? What's coming off?"

"Don't you know what time it is?" asked the old woman.

"Not quite midnight," answered the girl. "Not much after eleven."

"Have you not thought," went on the old woman, "that it is three years to-day since you came to me? Your time is up; we cannot stay together any longer."

The girl looked frightened, and said, "Oh, dear mother, don't cast me out. Where shall I go? I have no friends and no home to which I can turn. I have done everything you have told me, and you have always been satisfied with my work. Don't send me away."

The old woman did not wish to reveal to the girl the fate in store for her. "I haven't long to stay here," she said, "but before I leave, the house must be cleaned thoroughly; so don't interrupt me in my work. You needn't be afraid, you will have a roof over your head, come what may, and the reward I am going to give you will be ample for your wants."

"Oh, do tell me what is going to happen!" said the girl anxiously.

"I tell you again not to disturb me in my work," was the answer. "Don't say another word, but go to your room, wash off your dark skin, put on the silk dress you wore when you came here, and then wait till I call you."

But now we must go back to the king and queen, who, accompanied by the count, had gone into the wilderness to look for the old woman. The count in the forest got separated from them, and had to go on alone. The next day he thought he was on the right path and walked on and on till night fell, and then he climbed a tree where he intended to sleep, for he was afraid he might lose his way in the dark.

When the moon rose and illuminated the landscape he saw a figure climbing down the mountain. He recognised the same goose-girl (though she had no stick in her hand) that he had seen in the old woman's garden. "Oho," he exclaimed, "good business! If I am on the track of one witch the other won't escape me." But how astounded was he when he saw her go to the well, take off her skin, wash and let down her beautiful golden tresses! He had never seen any one so beautiful in his life before. He scarcely dared breathe, but stretched out his head as far

as it would go from his bower of foliage to gaze at her. Perhaps he stretched too far, for the bough he was on snapped, and at the same moment the lovely apparition hastily resumed her old skin, and fled like a deer, and as just then a cloud came over the moon, he lost sight of her.

The minute after she vanished thus, the count came down from the tree and followed the direction she had taken. He hadn't gone far before he saw two figures crossing the meadow. They were the king and queen, who had seen the light shining from the window of the old woman's house and were making for it. The count told them of the wonderful transformation he had witnessed by the well, and they were sure the beautiful girl must be their lost daughter.

In great glee they continued their way together, and soon came to the old woman's little house. The geese were squatting round it with their heads under their wings, and not one of them stirred. They looked in at the window and saw the old woman sitting at her spinning-wheel. She nodded her head and didn't look round. The little parlour was as spick and span as if the little fairymen lived there who cannot bear a speck of dust on their feet. The king and queen could not see their daughter in the room ; but they summoned up courage to knock softly on the window-pane.

The old woman appeared to expect them. She got up, and exclaimed in a friendly tone, "Come in, I know who you are!"

When they had walked into the parlour the old woman said, "You might have spared yourselves this long journey if three years ago you had not unjustly spurned your child who is so good and lovely. But you did her really no harm after all. For three years she has tended my geese, and in that time her pure heart has remained unsullied. But the anxiety you have suffered on her account has long ago punished you enough." Then she went to the bedroom door, and called, "Come out now, my dear little one."

The door opened, and the princess appeared in her silken draperies, with her golden hair and shining eyes, and complexion like apple-blossoms. She looked like an

angel from heaven. She came and embraced and kissed her father and mother, and all of them wept for joy.

The young count stood by, and when she saw him she blushed, she knew not why, till she looked like a moss-rose.

The king then said, "My child, I have now bequeathed my kingdom to the others. What shall I give you?"

"She needs nothing," the old dame interposed. "I will give her the tears she has shed for you. They are priceless pearls, more beautiful than those found in the sea, and worth more than a hundred kingdoms. And in reward for her services I shall make her a present of my little house."

Just as the old woman said this the walls creaked a little, and the old woman vanished before their eyes. On looking round they saw the small dwelling had changed into a magnificent palace, and a long table stood ready laid, with flunkeys running hither and thither.

There is more of the story, but my grandmother, who told it to me, had not a good memory, and she had forgotten the rest. I have an idea that the beautiful princess was married to the count, and that they lived together in the fairy palace happy and content.

Whether the white geese who were fed in the pasture by the little house were maidens whom the old woman had brought home with her at one time or another, and were now changed back into human beings again, as maids of honour to the young queen, I do not know, but I think it is probable. One thing is certain, the old woman was not a wicked witch at all, but a wise woman who meant to do good. Most likely it was she who at the princess's birth endowed her with the gift of shedding pearls instead of tears.

Nowadays such things do not occur; if they did, no one need be poor.

EVE'S DISSIMILAR CHILDREN

When Adam and Eve were driven out of paradise they were obliged to build themselves a house on barren ground and to earn their bread by the sweat of their

brow. Adam worked in the fields, and Eve spun wool. Every year Eve brought forth a child, but they all differed very much from each other, for some were pretty and some ugly.

After a certain time had elapsed God sent an angel to Adam and Eve, and told him to inform them that He was coming to overlook their household.

Eve, delighted that the Lord was so gracious, set to work to clean out her house, to adorn it with flowers, and to strew rushes on the floor. Eve then fetched her children, but only the beautiful ones, and washed and bathed them, combed their hair, and put them on clean pinafores. While doing so she admonished them to behave very properly and nicely before the Lord. They were to bow modestly before Him, shake hands with Him, and to answer His questions humbly but intelligently.

The ugly children, however, were not to appear. She hid one of them under the hay, another under the roof, a third in the straw, a fourth in the oven, a fifth in the cellar, the sixth under a tub, the seventh in a wine case, the eighth under an old fur skin, the ninth and tenth under the cloth out of which she made their clothes, and the eleventh and twelfth under the leather out of which she made their shoes. Just as she was ready a knock came at the door. Adam, on looking through a crack, saw it was the Lord, and respectfully opened the door, and the heavenly guest entered.

The beautiful children, who were all standing in a row, made their bows, offered their hands, and knelt down. The Lord then began to bless them, and laying His hands on the first said, "You shall become a mighty king;" and then in the same manner to the second, "And you a prince;" and to the third, "You a count;" to the fourth, "You a knight;" to the fifth, "You a nobleman;" to the sixth, "You a citizen;" to the seventh, "You a merchant;" and to the eighth, "You a learned man." Thus He divided amongst them all His rich blessings.

When Eve saw how kind and gracious the Lord was, she thought to herself, "I will fetch out my plain chil-

dren, and perhaps He will also bless them." So she immediately went and got them out of the hay, the straw, the oven, and wherever she had hidden them, till the whole dirty, rough, sooty tribe of them stood before the Lord. He on seeing them laughed, and said, "I will also bless these children," and He laid His hands on the first of them, and said, "You shall become a peasant;" to the second, "You a fisherman;" to the third, "You a smith;" to the fourth, "You a tanner;" to the fifth, "You a weaver;" to the sixth, "You a shoemaker;" to the seventh, "You a tailor;" to the eighth, "You a potter;" to the ninth, "You a carter;" to the tenth, "You a sailor;" to the eleventh, "You a messenger;" and to the twelfth, "You a servant all the days of your life."

When Eve heard all this, she said to the Lord, "How unequally you have divided your blessings! They are all children which I have borne, your favour ought therefore to be extended equally to each."

But God replied, "Eve, you do not understand. It is necessary for me to people the whole world with your children; if they were all princes and lords who would sow the corn, thrash it, grind it, and bake? Who would weave, chop wood, build, dig, cut, and sew? Each one shall have his own place, so that each shall receive support from the other, and the whole be maintained as the limbs of one body."

Then Eve answered, "Ah, Lord, forgive me. I was too quick when I interrupted you. May my children act up to your heavenly desire."

THE SPIRIT OF THE POND

Once upon a time there was a miller who lived very happily with his wife. They had money and possessions, and every year their position improved. But presently misfortune overtook them, and in the same way as their riches had increased, so they began year by year to disappear, until at last the miller could hardly call the mill in which he sat his own. He was very distressed, and when

he lay down after his day's work he could get no rest, but tossed about on his bed full of care.

One morning, in the hopes of feeling lighter-hearted, he got up before the break of day, and went out. As he was crossing the millbrook the first ray of sunshine broke out, and he thought he heard something splashing in the fish pond. On turning round he beheld a beautiful woman rising slowly out of the water. Her long hair, which she held round her shoulders with her soft hands, flowed down on each side and covered her white body.

He guessed at once that it was the spirit of the pond, and was so frightened that he really did not know whether to go away or stay. But the spirit called him by his name in a sweet voice, and asked him why he was so sad.

At first the miller was quite speechless, but hearing her speak so kindly he took heart, and related to her how formerly he had been rich and lived in happiness, but that now they were so poor he really did not know what to do.

"Take courage," answered the spirit, "I will make you richer and happier than you have even been before, only you must promise to give me what has just been born in your house."

"What can that be but a young cat or dog?" thought the miller to himself, and he promised to give the spirit that which she desired.

The spirit then disappeared in the water again, and he hurried back home much comforted and in good spirits. But before he reached the mill the servant came out of the house, and called upon him to rejoice, as his wife had borne him a little son.

The miller stood as if he had been struck by lightning, and saw at once that the cunning spirit had known this, and had deceived him. He went to his wife's bedside with his head bowed down, and when she asked him why he did not rejoice at the birth of his beautiful boy, he related to her what had happened to him, and what he had promised the spirit. "What is the good of my fortune and riches," sighed he, "when I must lose my child? but what can I do?"

And even the relations who had come to congratulate could not give any advice.

In the meantime good fortune returned to the miller's house. Everything which he undertook succeeded, and it was as if the chests and cases filled of themselves, and the money in the cupboard seemed to increase during the night. It was not long before he was richer even than before. Still he could not enjoy it quietly, as the promise which he had given the nymph always tormented him. Whenever he passed the pond he was afraid she might rise up and demand her debt. He never allowed the boy himself to go near the water. "Beware," he said to him, "if you approach the water a hand will come out, seize hold of you and drag you down."

But when year after year passed, and the nymph never reappeared, the miller began to calm himself.

The boy grew up to be a youth, and was apprenticed to a hunter. When he had finished learning and had become a splendid huntsman, the squire of the village took him into his service.

In the village there dwelt a beautiful and faithful maiden, with whom the hunter fell very much in love. His master on discovering this presented him with a little house, which enabled them to get married at once. They lived happily and harmoniously together, for they loved each other with all their hearts.

One day the hunter was chasing a roe, and during the pursuit the animal flew out of the wood into the open field. The huntsman followed and finally stabbed it. He did not notice that he was now close to the dangerous millpond, and when he had cleaned the animal he went to the water and washed away the blood from his hands. But he had scarcely dipped his hands into the water before the nymph rose to the surface, smilingly encircled him with her wet arms and drew him down so quickly that the waves immediately closed over him.

In the evening, when the huntsman did not return home, his poor wife was in great distress. She went out to look for him, and as he had often told her that he had to beware of the wily ways of the nymph, and must never venture near the millpond, she already guessed what had happened. She hastened to the water, and when she found his hunting-pouch on the shore, she no longer had any doubt as to the

cause of the misfortune. She wrung her hands and wept aloud, calling her beloved by his name, but all in vain. She then hurried to the other side of the pond and cried to him anew ; she cursed the nymph and called her all manner of names, but no answer followed. The face of the water remained unruffled, and only the half-moon looked down tranquilly upon her. The poor woman did not quit the pond. She went quickly round and round it without resting a moment, sometimes uttering loud cries, and sometimes sobbing softly to herself.

At last she could go on no longer, and she sank to the ground and fell fast asleep. Presently she dreamt a dream. She was anxiously climbing upwards between enormous rocks. Thorns and briars were tearing her feet, the rain was driving in her face, and the wind blowing about her long hair. When she reached the top quite another scene greeted her eyes. The heaven was blue, the air soft, the ground sloped gradually down to a green meadow, in the middle of which stood a clean little cottage. She went up to it, and on opening the door saw an old woman with white hair sitting inside, who beckoned kindly to her.

The same minute the poor woman awoke. The day had already dawned, and she decided to immediately follow out her dream. She wearily toiled up the mountain, and everything took place exactly as it had done in her sleep.

The old woman received her kindly, and gave her a chair to sit down upon. "You must have suffered misfortune," she said, "since you have sought out my lonely little house."

The woman related with many tears what had happened to her.

"Be comforted," said the old dame, "I will help you. Here is a gold comb for you. Wait until it is full moon and then go to the fish pond, sit down at the edge of the water and comb your long black hair with this comb ; but when you have finished, place it on the shore, and you will see what will happen."

The woman went back, but the time of waiting for the full moon seemed very long ; but at last the shining disc appeared in the heavens, and she went out, and sitting

down beside the pond, combed her long black hair with the golden comb. When she had finished she laid it down at the water's edge. It was not long before there was a movement in the depths, and a wave arose, rolled up on the shore and carried away the comb. As soon as the comb had sunk to the bottom, the waters divided, and the head of the hunter rose up out of them. He said not a word, but gazed sadly at his wife. The same moment a second wave dashed up and covered the man's head. Everything disappeared and the pond remained as quiet as before, with only the face of the full moon shining down upon it.

The woman turned away very sadly, but again the dream showed her the old woman's cottage. The next morning, therefore, she made her way there, and sorrowfully related her trouble to the wise woman.

The old dame gave her a golden flute, and said, "Wait until the full moon comes round again, and then take the flute on to the shore, and there play a beautiful tune; when you have finished lay it on the sand, and you will see what will happen."

The woman did as the old dame told her. She had scarcely laid the flute on the sand before the depths began to move, and a wave arose and carried away the flute. Soon after the waters divided, and this time not only the head but half the body of her husband also rose up. He stretched out his arms lovingly towards her, but another wave rushed up, covered him, and dragged him down again.

"Ah!" said the woman, "what is the use of beholding my beloved only to lose him again?"

Sorrow again took possession of her heart, but a dream led her yet a third time to the old woman's house. She set out there again, and the wise woman gave her a golden spinning-wheel, and comforted her by saying, "Everything is not yet fulfilled, wait until it is the full moon and then go down to the shore with your spinning-wheel, and when the spool is full put the wheel near the water, and you will see what will happen."

The woman did exactly as she was bid. As soon as the full moon appeared she carried the golden spinning-wheel

to the shore and span industriously until the spool was full of flax. She had hardly placed the wheel on the shore before there was a much greater movement in the waters than formerly, and an enormous wave dashed up and bore the wheel away with it. Immediately the man's head and body rose up into the air in a jet of water. He quickly sprang to shore, seized his wife by the hand and fled.

But before they had gone any distance the whole pond rose with a mighty roar and streamed far out into the country with tremendous force. Already the poor fugitives saw death before them, and in her agony the woman called out to the old dame for help. Immediately she was changed into a toad and her husband into a frog. The flood, which had now reached them, was unable to kill them, but it tore them apart and drove them far away from each other. When the water had dispersed and they both touched dry land again, they recovered their human forms. But neither of them knew where the other was, and they both found themselves among strange people, who did not know where their home was. High mountains and deep valleys lay between them. In order to keep themselves alive they were obliged to tend sheep. For many years they drove their flocks through fields and forests, and were full of sorrow and yearning.

When spring came once more over the earth, it happened that one day they both went out with the flocks, and as luck would have it, they journeyed in the same direction. On a distant mountain-side he perceived another flock, and drove his sheep towards the same point.

They met in a valley, but did not recognise each other; still they rejoiced that they were no longer so lonely. From this time onwards they drove their flocks near to each other every day; they did not talk much but they felt comforted.

One evening when the full moon was shining, and the sheep were already at rest, the shepherd pulled the flute out of his pocket and played a beautiful but sad tune. When he had finished he noticed that the shepherdess was weeping bitterly.

"Why do you weep?" he asked.

"Ah," answered she, "the last time I played that tune on the flute it was also full moon, and the head of my beloved appeared out of the water."

He looked at her, and it was exactly as if a veil had fallen from his eyes, for he recognised his dear wife, and as she gazed at him, and the moon shone on his face, she also knew him. She threw her arms around him and kissed him, and it is not necessary to add how happy they were.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE'S PRESENTS

A TAILOR and a goldsmith were travelling together, and one evening, as the sun was sinking behind the mountains, they heard the sound of some distant music, which grew more and more distinct. It sounded so strange, but yet so agreeable, that they forgot their fatigue and quickly began to walk on farther. It was already moonlight before they reached a hill, on which they beheld a mass of little men and women, who were holding hands and dancing together right merrily. They were also singing most beautifully, and that was the music which the travellers had heard. An old man, somewhat taller than the rest, clad in a many-coloured coat and wearing a long iron-grey beard, sat in the middle. The two stood still, full of astonishment, and watched the dance to the end. The old man beckoned to them to come in, and the little people willingly opened their circle. The goldsmith, who had a hump, and, like all hunchbacks, was cheeky enough for anything, stepped on. The tailor felt a little shy at first and held back, but when he saw how merry they were inside he took courage and followed. Immediately the circle was closed again, and the little people jumped and danced in the wildest manner again, but the old man took out a big knife which hung from his belt, whetted it, and when it was sharpened looked round at the strangers. They were very frightened, but they had not very long to think about it, as the old man seized hold of the goldsmith, and adroitly shaved off his beard and the hair of his head. The same thing then happened to the tailor. But their

fear soon disappeared as the old man patted them both kindly on the shoulder, as much as to say they had done well to let this be done to them willingly and without struggling. He pointed them out a heap of coals which was lying on one side, and made them understand through signs that they were to fill their pockets with it. They both obeyed, although they really did not know what use the coal could be to them, and then went on farther to seek a night's lodging.

When they reached the valley the clock of the neighbouring monastery struck twelve. Immediately the singing ceased, everything disappeared, and the hill lay quietly in the moonshine. The two travellers found an inn, lay down on their straw-beds, covered themselves up with their coats, and, thanks to being so tired, quite forgot to take the coal out of their pockets.

A heavy weight on their limbs woke them up earlier than usual. They felt in their pockets, and could hardly believe their eyes when they saw that instead of coal, they were filled with pure gold. Happily also the hair of their heads and beards was growing in again abundantly.

They were now rich folk, but the goldsmith, who was of a greedy disposition, had filled his pockets twice as full as the tailor.

Now a greedy person, even when he has much, always wants more ; so the goldsmith proposed to the tailor that they should wait another day and go back to the mountain in the evening and fetch more treasure from the old man.

But the tailor did not wish to go, and said, "I have enough and am contented. I shall now be able to be a master and marry the object of my affections (as he termed his sweetheart), and I feel a happy man. Still, to please his friend, he stayed another day.

In the evening the goldsmith hung two bags over his shoulder in order to be able to stow away a great deal, and set out for the hill. Like the night before, he found the little people singing and dancing, and after having shaved him as formerly, the old man pointed him out some coal to take away with him. He did not hesitate to

fill his bags as full as possible, and returned home quite happy, lay down, and covered himself with his coat.

"If the gold presses very heavily," said he, "I shall easily be able to bear it," and at last he fell asleep with the delicious sensation that to-morrow he would wake up an immensely rich man. When he opened his eyes he got up quickly in order to look in the bags, but what was his astonishment to find that however often he put in his hands he always drew out black coal. "The gold that I got the night before is still left for me," thought he, and went and fetched it, but to his horror he saw that it also had turned to coal. He put his dusty black hand up to his forehead and felt that his whole head was smooth and bald like his chin.

But his misfortunes were not yet at an end. He noticed that in addition to the hump on his back he had another just as big on his breast. He then saw how his greed had been punished and began to weep aloud.

This woke up the good tailor, who did his best to comfort him in his affliction, and said, "You have been my travelling companion and shall now remain with me and share my treasure." He kept his word, but the poor goldsmith was obliged to carry two humps all the days of his life, and to cover his bald head with a cap.

THE GIANT AND THE TAILOR

It once occurred to a tailor, who although great at boasting was poor at doing, that he would go out into the world and look about him. As soon as he could he left his workshop, and

> Over bridge and path
> The traveller took his way,
> Sometimes here, sometimes there,
> Away, away, away.

After journeying some way he perceived a steep mountain in the far distance, and behind the mountain a tower, reaching the skies which rose up out of a wild dark forest. "Good gracious!" cried the tailor, "what is that?" and

overcome with curiosity he went quickly forwards. But to his utter astonishment, when he got nearer he found that the tower had legs, and in one bound it jumped over the mountain, and a mighty giant stood before him. "What are you doing here, you tiny fly's leg?" the latter cried in a voice which sounded like thunder.

"I am looking about me to see if I can earn a piece of bread in the forest," whimpered the tailor.

"If that is all you want you can enter into my service," replied the giant.

"If it must be so, why not? But what wages shall I receive?"

"What wages?" said the giant. "You shall soon know that. Three hundred and sixty-five days every year, and when it is leap-year another one into the bargain. Does that suit you?"

"All right," answered the tailor; and he thought to himself, "one must cut one's cloth according to one's coat. I shall try and escape as soon as possible."

The giant then said, "Go and fetch me a jug of water, you little vagabond."

"Would it not be better to bring the whole well at once and the spring too?" inquired the boaster as he was going to get the water with his jug.

"What! the spring and the well?" growled the giant, who was rather stupid and began to be afraid. "That fellow is up to doing something more than roasting apples. I believe he has got a demon inside him. Take care, old Hans, this isn't the sort of servant for you."

When the tailor brought back the water he told him to go into the forest, hew down a couple of logs of wood, and bring them home. "Why not the whole forest with one blow?" asked the little tailor, and went off to cut the wood.

"What!" growled the giant in his beard, "the whole forest with one blow and both the spring and the well?" and he was more afraid than ever. "Yes, that fellow is most certainly up to something more than roasting apples. I feel convinced he has a demon in him. Look out, old Hans, that is no servant for you."

When the tailor had brought back the wood, the giant

told him to go and shoot two or three wild boars for supper. "Why should I not shoot a thousand with one shot and bring them all here?" asked the insolent tailor.

"What!" cried the cowardly giant, who was now very frightened. "That will do for to-day, go and lie down and sleep."

The giant was so terrified that he never closed his eyes the whole night, but tried to think of some way in which he could get rid of this cursed sorcerer of a servant as soon as possible. Time brings advice.

The next morning the giant and the tailor went to a pool around which grew a great many willow-trees, and the giant said, "Listen, tailor; go and sit on one of those willow-branches, there is nothing I should like so much as to see whether you are strong enough to bend it down. Quickly the little tailor went to sit up there. He took a long breath, and made himself as heavy as possible, so heavy that the branch bent down; but when he was obliged to take another breath it sprang up again, and to the giant's great delight, threw the tailor so high into the air that he was never seen again. If he did not fall down again, he must still be floating about in the air.

THE NAIL

A MERCHANT had done a good business at the fair, sold all his wares, and filled his money-bags with gold and silver. He wished now to return and reach home before the night fell. So he placed the bag with the money on his horse and rode away.

At midday he rested in a town; and when he was leaving the stable-boy brought him the horse, saying, "Sir, there is a nail wanting in the shoe of his left hind foot."

"Let it be," said the merchant; "the shoe will hold on for the six miles I have yet to travel. I am in haste."

In the afternoon, as he had again dismounted to get his horse fed, the stable-boy came into the room and said, "Sir, your horse has lost the shoe off his left hind foot; shall I take him to the blacksmith?"

"Let it be," replied the man; "the horse can hold out

for the couple of miles remaining. I am in a hurry." So he rode away, but soon after the horse fell lame. In a little while it began to stumble, and shortly after fell and broke a leg.

The merchant was obliged to leave the horse, unstrap the bag, and taking it on his shoulders, walk home, which he did not reach until late at night.

"This detestable nail," said he, "is to blame for all these misfortunes. The more haste, the worse speed."

THE POOR BOY IN THE GRAVE

Once upon a time there was a poor young shepherd boy. When his parents died the magistrate sent him to the house of a rich man who was to bring him up and nourish him. But the man and his wife were not kind-hearted, and in spite of all their riches were miserly and ungenerous, and were even annoyed when any one ate a piece of their bread. Do what he could the poor shepherd boy received very little to eat, but many blows. One day he was set to look after a hen and her chickens, but they managed to escape through a hole in the hedge, and immediately a hawk swooped down and carried the hen up in the air.

The boy called out at the top of his voice, "Thief, thief, rogue!" But what was the use of that? The hawk did not bring back his prey.

On hearing the noise the man ran out, and when he heard that his hen had gone, he flew into a terrible rage and gave the boy such a beating that he was unable to move for two days. After this he was obliged to look after the chickens without the hen, which was even more difficult, as they ran hither and thither. Then he thought it would be a good idea to tie them all on to a string, as then the hawk could not steal them away. But he was much mistaken.

A few days later, when he was worn out with hunger and so much running about, he fell asleep. The bird of prey came down, seized one of the chickens, and as the others were attached to it, carried them all away, and then

went and perched on a tree and demolished them. The man was just returning home, and on seeing the disaster he got in a temper and beat the poor boy so unmercifully that he had to lie in bed for many days.

When he was able to stand up again the man said to him, "You are too stupid for me, I can't make any use of you as a herdsman ; you must try as a message boy." So he sent him to the judge with a basket of grapes and gave him a letter with it. On the way the poor boy was so tormented with hunger and thirst that he ate two bunches of grapes.

He took the judge the basket, but when he had read the letter and counted the grapes he said, "There are two bunches missing."

The boy told him quite honestly that, driven by hunger and thirst, he had eaten them.

The judge wrote a letter to the man and ordered the same number of grapes again. These also the boy had to carry with a letter.

Again hunger and thirst seized hold of him so violently that he could not help consuming two bunches of grapes as before. But first he took the letter out of the basket, hid it under a stone and sat upon it, so that it should not see and betray him. But the judge again inquired for the missing grapes.

"Ah," said the boy, "how have you learnt that ? The letter could not have told it, for first of all I laid it under a stone."

The judge could not help laughing at his simplicity, and sent the man a letter, in which he warned him to look after the boy better and to give him plenty to eat and drink, and also to teach him what was right and what was wrong.

"I will soon show you the difference," said the cruel man. "If you will eat, you must work, and if you do wrong you will learn it sufficiently by blows."

The next day he set him some very heavy work. He was to cut a couple of bundles of straw for food for the horses. "And," said the man, "in five hours I shall be back, and if the straw is not cut to chaff by that time I will beat you until you cannot move a limb of your body."

The man went to market with his wife and their man-servant and maid, and only left a little piece of bread for the boy. The boy sat down on the bench and began to work with all his might. As he got very hot he took off his little coat and threw it on the straw. In his terror lest he should not be finished in time he kept on cutting, and in his haste he accidentally cut up his little coat with the straw. When he perceived his misfortune it was too late to remedy it. "Alas!" cried he, "it is all over with me. The wicked man did not threaten me for nothing, and when he comes back and sees what I have done he will beat me until I am dead. Rather than suffer that I will kill myself."

The boy had once heard the peasant's wife say, "I have a jar of poison under my bed." But she had only said this to keep greedy people away, for there was really honey in it. The boy crept under the bed, brought out the jar and finished its contents.

"People say," said he, "that death is bitter, but it tastes very sweet to me. No wonder the peasant's wife so often wishes herself dead." He sat down on a little chair and was prepared to die. But instead of feeling weaker he felt stronger after the nourishing food.

"It can't have been poison," said he, "but the peasant once said he had a little bottle of fly's poison in his wardrobe, which no doubt will be real poison and cause my death." But it was not fly's poison, but Hungarian wine. The boy fetched the bottle and emptied it.

"This death also tastes sweet," he said; but immediately the wine began to mount to his head and confuse him, so he thought his end was approaching. "I feel as if I must die," said he, "I will go out into the churchyard and look for a grave." He stumbled out, and when he reached the churchyard he lay down in a freshly-dug grave. His senses deserted him more and more.

There was an inn in the neighbourhood where a marriage was being celebrated; when he heard the music he thought he was in Paradise, until at last he lost consciousness.

The boy never woke again, for the glow of the hot wine and the damp air of the night deprived him of his life,

and he remained in the grave in which he had laid himself.

When the man heard of the boy's death he was very frightened, for he feared he might be brought to justice. He was, in fact, so terrified that he fell down in a fainting fit. His wife, who was standing on the hearth with a pan of wax, ran forward to help him up. But the fire caught the pan and then set the house on fire, so that in a few hours it lay in ashes. Thus, for the remainder of their lives they not only suffered from remorse, but also from poverty and misery.

THE TRUE BRIDE

THERE was once a young and beautiful maiden. She lost her mother when a child, and her step-mother did everything she could to make her life a burden to her. When she gave her any work, however difficult it might be, the girl went at it untiringly, and did as much as was in her power. But she was unable to touch the wicked woman's heart in this way; she was never satisfied, and always found the girl had not done enough; in fact, the harder she worked the more she was given to do; and the only way she got thanked was by being burdened with heavier loads, and by her life being made utterly miserable.

One day her step-mother said to her, "There are twelve pounds of feathers for you to pluck, and if you have not finished by this evening you may expect a good beating. Do you imagine that you can sit idle all day?"

The poor girl set to work, but the tears poured down her cheeks, for she saw that it was impossible for her to finish the work in a day. If in her distress she sighed, or wrung her hands together, when a little pile of feathers were lying before her they flew apart, and she had to pick them up again and start afresh. At last she put her elbows on the table, hid her face in her hands, and cried out, "Is there no one on God's earth to have pity on me?" Whereupon she heard a soft voice, saying, "Be comforted, my child, I have come to help you."

The girl looked up, and saw an old woman standing by

her side. She took the girl kindly by the hand, and said, "Confide all your troubles in me."

She spoke so gently that the girl told her all about her sad life, and explained how burden upon burden was laid upon her, and how impossible it was for her to get through her present work. "If I have not done these feathers by this evening my step-mother will beat me; she has threatened me with it, and she always keeps her word;" and here the girl began to cry again, but the old woman said—

"Never mind, child, go and rest yourself, and in the meantime I will do your work for you."

The girl lay down on her bed, and was soon fast asleep. The old woman sat down at the table with the feathers, and oh! how they flew off the quills, which she scarcely touched with her hard hands. She soon finished the twelve pounds.

When the girl awoke large snow-white heaps of feathers were lying piled up, and the room was cleanly swept out, but the old woman had vanished. The girl thanked God, and remained quiet until evening.

When her step-mother came in she was simply astonished to find the work completed. "You see, you lazy thing," said she, "what can be done if one is diligent. Could you not have found something else to do instead of sitting there with your hands in your lap?" As she was leaving the room she said to herself, "That creature is worth more than her salt. I must give her some harder work to do."

The next morning she called the girl and said, "Here is a spoon, go and clear out the big pond at the bottom of the garden with it, and if you have not finished by this evening you know what will follow."

The girl took the spoon and saw that it had a hole in it, but even if this had not been the case she could never have emptied the pond with it. However, she set to work at once, and kneeling down beside the water, into which her tears fell, began to bale.

But the good old woman appeared again, and when she learnt the cause of the girl's distress, said, "Be comforted, my child; go and sleep in the bushes, and I will do your work for you."

When she was alone, the old woman merely touched the water and it began to rise into the air like vapour and mingle with the clouds.

Gradually the pond became empty, and when at sunset the girl awoke there was nothing to be seen but the fishes flapping in the mud. She went to her step-mother and showed her that the work was completed.

"You ought to have finished long ago," she said, turning white with rage, and already beginning to turn over in her mind what she could now give the girl to do.

The third morning she said to her, "You are to build a beautiful castle for me on that piece of level ground over there, and it must be ready by this evening."

The poor girl was utterly dismayed, and said, "How could I ever execute such a great piece of work?"

"I will stand no contradiction," screamed her step-mother. "If you can empty out a pond with a spoon with a hole in it, you can build a castle. I shall take up my abode there to-day, and if there is anything missing, even if it be the most trifling thing in the kitchen or cellar, you may know what to expect," and she drove the girl away.

When the latter reached the valley she found rocks piled up one against the other; using all her strength, she could not even move the smallest of them.

She sat down and began to cry, her one hope lying in the appearance of the old woman, who did not keep her waiting long, but came and comforted her by saying, "Just lie down and sleep in the shade, and I will build your castle for you, and if it pleases you, you shall live in it yourself."

When the girl was gone the old woman touched the grey rocks. Immediately they began to move towards each other, and stood side by side as if a giant had built the wall; then the building began to form itself, and it was just as if innumerable unseen hands were working and laying stone upon stone. The earth groaned, and great pillars arose and arranged themselves in order, the tiles placed themselves neatly on the roof, and at midday a weathercock, like a golden virgin with flying garments, was turning on the top of the tower. The inside of the

castle was completed by the evening. How the old woman managed it I really do not know, but the walls of the rooms were hung with silk and velvet, richly upholstered chairs were standing about, handsomely carved arm-chairs were placed in front of marble tables, and crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling and were reflected in the polished floor. Green parrots and beautiful singing birds were swinging in gold cages, and everywhere splendour worthy of a king was to be seen.

The sun was just setting when the girl awoke and found the brilliancy of thousands of lights flashing in her eyes. She got up quickly and ran into the castle through the open door. The steps were covered with red cloth, and the golden railings garnished with flowering trees. When she beheld the splendour of the rooms she stood still, absolutely stupefied. Who knows how long she would have remained so, if she had not suddenly remembered her step-mother. "Ah!" she said to herself, "if only she could be satisfied at last, and not frighten me out of my wits any longer." So the maiden went and showed her mother that the castle was ready.

"I will go and inhabit it at once," she said, getting up from her seat.

When she entered the castle she had to put her hands before her eyes, the brilliancy dazzled her so. "You see," she said to the girl, "how easily you do everything. I ought to have given you something more difficult." She went through all the rooms and poked into every corner, to see if anything were missing or wrong, but could find nothing. "Now we will go below," she said, casting a look of hatred at the girl. "The kitchen and cellars have yet to be looked through, and if you have forgotten anything you shall not escape your punishment."

But the fire was burning on the hearth, and the supper cooking in the pots, the shovel and tongs were in their place, a row of shining kitchen utensils arranged against the wall. Nothing was missing, not even the coal-box or the water-pail.

"Where is the entrance to the cellar?" she cried. "If it is not well filled with wine it will be a bad thing for you." She lifted up the trap-door herself and went down

the steps, but she had scarcely taken two steps before the heavy trap-door, which was only tilted back, fell on her. The girl heard a cry and quickly lifted up the trap-door to help her, but it had knocked her down, and she lay lifeless at the bottom.

Now the beautiful castle belonged to the girl alone. At first she did not know what to do, she was so happy; the cupboards were filled with beautiful clothes, and some of the drawers with gold and silver, and others with pearls and precious stones; in fact, she had everything she wanted. Soon the renown of the girl's beauty and riches went throughout the world. Suitors presented themselves daily, but none of them pleased her. At last a king's son also came, and he succeeded in winning her heart, and they were engaged.

In the castle garden was a lime-tree, under which the lovers were one day sitting happily together, when he said to her, "I must go home and get my father's permission for our marriage. I beseech you to wait for me here, under this tree, and I shall be back in a few hours."

The girl kissed him on his left cheek and said, "Keep true to me, and don't let any one kiss you on this cheek. I will wait for you under this lime-tree."

She sat on under the lime-tree until sunset, but he had not returned. She sat there for three entire days and waited for him, but in vain.

When he did not appear on the fourth day she said, "Something most certainly must have happened to him, I will go and look for him, and not come back until I have found him. She packed up her three prettiest dresses, the one covered with shining stars, the second with silver moons, and the third with golden suns, and also a handful of precious stones, and set out. Everywhere she went she inquired after her lover, but no one had either seen or heard of him. She wandered far and wide over the world but could not find him. At last she hired herself out to a farmer as a shepherdess, and hid her dresses and precious stones under a large stone.

She now lived as a shepherdess, and while tending her sheep was very sad, and longed for her beloved. She

had a little calf, which grew quite tame, and used to eat out of her hand, and when she said—

"Kneel down, little calf, by my side,
Come closer unto me;
Be not as the prince who forgot his bride
Under the old lime-tree,"

the calf knelt down and let her stroke it.

After having thus spent two sad and lonely years, the news that the king's daughter was going to be married was spread over the land. The road to the town passed through the village where the maiden was living, and it happened that once while she was tending her sheep the bridegroom passed by. He sat proudly on his horse, and did not look near her, but she saw him and recognised her lover. She felt as if a sharp knife were cutting her heart. "Ah!" she sighed, "I thought he would have remained true to me, but he has forgotten."

Another day he again passed along the road. When he came near she said to the calf—

"Kneel down, little calf, by my side,
Come closer unto me;
Be not as the prince who forgot his bride
Under the old lime-tree."

When he heard the voice he looked round, and reined in his horse. He looked the shepherdess in the face, and put his hands to his eyes as if he wanted to remember something, and then rode on farther, and soon disappeared.

"Alas!" she cried, "he does not know me any longer," and she was sadder than ever.

Soon afterwards the whole country was invited to a three days' feast given by the king at his court. "Now," thought she, "I will try my last chance."

When the evening came she went to the stone, took out the dress covered with golden suns, put it on, and adorned herself with precious stones. She unbound her hair, which she had been wearing concealed under a handkerchief, and let her long curls fall down her back. She then went to the

town, and as it was dark no one noticed her. At her appearance in the brilliantly illuminated hall everybody started back in astonishment, but nobody knew who she was. The prince went forward to meet her, but still he did not recognise her. He danced with her, and was so charmed with her beauty that he scarcely gave the other bride a thought. When the *fête* was over she disappeared in the crowd, and was back in the village before break of day, clad once more in her shepherdess' dress.

The next evening she wore her dress with the moons, and put a crescent moon of precious stones in her hair. When she appeared at the banquet every one turned to gaze at her, but the king's son hastened towards her, danced with her the whole evening, and would not look at any one else. Before she went away he made her promise that she would come again the next evening.

When she appeared the third evening she was wearing the star dress, which shimmered and glittered at every step she took, and in her hair and round her waist were stars of precious stones.

The prince had been waiting for her for a long time, and managed to press his way towards her. When he reached her he said, "Now, do tell me who you are. It seems to me I have known you for a long time."

"Don't you remember what I did when we parted?" she answered, and, stepping up to him, kissed his left cheek.

At that moment scales seemed to fall from his eyes, and he recognised his true bride. "Come away," he said, "I cannot stay here any longer," and, seizing her hand, he led her to the carriage.

The horses seemed to fly like the wind to the magic castle, and they could see the illuminated windows shining from afar. On passing the lime-tree it shook its branches and sent out a sweet fragrance into the air; underneath it there were an innumerable quantity of glow-worms. Flowers adorned the steps, and the song of the birds echoed in the rooms, but in the hall the whole court had assembled, and a priest was there waiting to unite the bridegroom to his true bride.

THE HEDGEHOG AND THE HARE

This story, children, will at first look like a hoax, but still it is true, for my grandfather, from whom I have it, used always to say when he told the tale, "It must be true, boys, or else one couldn't tell it." Here is the story just as it happened.

It was on a fine morning in harvest time, just when the poppies were in flower. The sun was shining in the sky, the morning wind blew freshly over the stubble, the larks were singing in the air, the bees hummed in the hedges, and people were going to church in their Sunday clothes. Everything that had life seemed to rejoice, and the hedgehog was glad too.

The hedgehog stood before his door with his arms folded, and was looking up into the morning air and humming a tune, as well or as ill as a hedgehog can hum on a fine Sunday morning. While he was thus singing softly to himself it occurred to him that while his wife was washing and dressing the children he might as well walk out into the fields and look about him and see how his turnips were growing. These turnips grew near his house, and he and his family were in the habit of stealing them to eat, and so he looked upon them as his own. The hedgehog shut his door behind him, and betook himself to the fields. He had not got far from home, and was just turning round by a sloe-bush, hard by the turnip-field, when he was met by the hare, who had gone out for a similar purpose—in fact, to look at his cabbages. When the hedgehog saw the hare coming he bade him a friendly good-day. But the hare, who was a very grand gentleman in his way, and very arrogant into the bargain, did not return the hedgehog's salute, but said to him with a look of the most supercilious contempt, "How come you to be running about the fields so early this morning?"

"I'm out for a walk," answered the hedgehog.

"Out for a walk!" repeated the hare, with a laugh. "I think you might use your legs to better purpose."

Now this speech annoyed the hedgehog beyond all endurance. He can bear anything, but he allows nothing to

be said against his legs, because they happen to be crooked by nature. So he answered, "I suppose you imagine you could do a good deal more with your legs than I could with mine?"

"I flatter myself I could," replied the hare.

"That remains to be proved," cried the hedgehog. "I bet that if we run a race I manage to pass you."

"That's a good idea, you with your crooked legs," laughed the hare; "but I don't care, let it be so, if you wish it so very much. What is to be the bet?"

"A golden guinea and a bottle of wine," said the hedgehog.

"Accepted," cried the hare; "shake hands upon it, and let us decide it at once."

"No; there's no such great hurry," said the hedgehog. "I've had nothing to eat yet this morning; I'll go home and have a bit of breakfast, and in half an hour I shall be at your service."

The hare consented to this, and the hedgehog went away. On the road he said to himself, "The hare trusts in his long legs, but I'll play him a trick. He thinks himself a great man, but he is only a stupid fellow, and I'll make him pay."

So when the hedgehog reached home he said to his wife, "Wife, make haste and dress yourself, you must go into the fields with me."

"What's the matter?" asked the wife.

"I've laid a wager with the hare—a golden guinea and a bottle of wine—and I'm going to run him a race, and want you to help me."

"Oh, my goodness, husband!" cried the hedgehog's wife; "are you in your senses, or have you gone mad? How can you ever think of running a race with the hare?"

"Hold your tongue, wife," replied the hedgehog, "that's my affair. Don't you put your nose into men's business. Be quick, dress yourself, and we'll go off together."

What could the hedgehog's wife do? She was obliged to obey him, whether she liked it or not.

As they walked along the road together, the hedgehog said to his wife, "Now, listen to what I am going to say to you. Look, we'll run our race in the long field, yonder.

The hare will run in one furrow, and I'll run in the other, and we begin to run from the other end of the field. Now, you've nothing more to do but to crouch down here in the furrow, and when the hare arrives near you do you jump up and cry, 'Here I am already!'"

As he said this he came to the field. The hedgehog showed his wife where she was to place herself, and then went away up the field. When he came to the other end, he found the hare waiting there, and the hare said, "Shall we begin?"

"Certainly," answered the hedgehog.

"Go on, then." And each took his place in his separate furrow.

The hare counted, "One—two—three!" and away he went down the field like the wind. As for the hedgehog he only ran two or three steps, and then crouched down in his furrow, and sat there quietly.

When the hare came running at full speed to the other end of the field the hedgehog's wife called out to him, "Here I am already!"

The hare started, and was not a little astonished. He made sure it was the hedgehog himself who spoke; for it is well known that a hedgehog's wife exactly resembles her husband.

The hare thought, "There must be witchcraft at work here." He cried out, "Back again—we'll run once more;" and away he started again like the whirlwind, so that his ears were blown straight out behind his head. But the hedgehog's wife stayed quietly where she was.

When the hare arrived at the upper end of the field the hedgehog called out to him, "Here I am already!" And the hare, quite beside himself with wonder, replied, "Back again—we'll run once more."

"I don't object," replied the hedgehog; "so far as I am concerned we'll run as often as you like."

So the hare ran seventy-three times, and the hedgehog managed to keep pace with him. Every time when the hare arrived at the upper or lower end of the field the hedgehog or his wife was waiting to say, "Here I am already!"

The seventy-fourth time the hare could not get to the end of his run. In the middle of the field he fell down on

the ground, the blood ran from his mouth, and he lay dead upon the course.

The hedgehog took the guinea and the bottle of wine he had won, and called his wife out of the furrow, and they went home in very good spirits ; and if they're not dead they're alive still.

Thus it was that on Buxtehude[1] Heath the hedgehog ran the hare to death ; and since that time no hare has ever taken it into his head to run a race with a Buxtehude hedgehog.

What you have to learn from this history is—firstly, that no man, if he thinks himself ever so grand, should take upon himself to make fun of his inferior, or even of a hedgehog ; and, secondly, that when a man marries, it is a good thing to take a wife out of his own rank, and one that resembles her husband ; so whoever is a hedgehog, let him see that his wife is a hedgehog too.

THE SPINDLE, THE SHUTTLE, AND THE NEEDLE

A YOUNG girl had lost her parents when she was very young. She had a godmother, who lived all alone in a little cottage at the end of the village, and who lived on what she earned by her needle, her spindle, and her shuttle. This good woman had taken the orphan home, and had taught her to work, and brought her up in piety and the fear of God.

When the young girl was fifteen years old her godmother fell sick. She called the child to her bedside and said, "Dear child, I feel that my end is near. I leave you my cottage, it will protect you against the wind and rain. I also give you my spindle, my shuttle, and my needle, which will enable you to earn your living." Then placing her hand upon the girl's head she blessed her, and said, "Keep your heart pure and honest, and happiness will come to you." Then her eyes closed ; the poor girl went weeping

[1] Buxtehude is a German village which has become proverbial for the funny tales told of its inhabitants, just as in France all the funny tricks are said to be played by "Gascons."

beside her godmother's coffin, and paid the last duties to her corpse.

After this she lived all alone, working bravely at weaving, spinning, and sewing ; and the blessing of the good old woman kept her from all harm. One would have thought that her stock of flax was inexhaustible, and as soon as she had woven a piece of stuff, or made a shirt, a purchaser was sure to come and pay generously for it ; so that not only was she free from want, but had even something to give to the poor.

About this time the king's son began roaming through the country in search of a wife. He could not choose a poor one, and did not like a rich one. So he said he would choose her who was at the same time the poorest and the richest. On coming to the village where our young girl dwelt, he at once asked, according to his wont, to be shown the poorest and the richest girl in the place. The richest was quickly found ; as for the poorest, they told him it must be the young girl who lived in the lonely cottage quite at the end of the hamlet.

When the prince passed by the rich girl was sitting dressed in her best in front of her door ; she rose and went towards him with a profound curtsey. But he looked at her, and without saying a word passed on. He then came to the cottage of the poor girl ; she was not at the door, but shut up in her room. He stopped and looked through the window into the room, which a ray of the sun lighted up. She was sitting at her spinning-wheel, working industriously. On her part she secretly observed the prince looking at her ; but she blushed scarlet, and continued spinning with her eyes cast down ; only I won't warrant that her thread was quite even. She went on spinning until the prince was gone. So soon as she had lost sight of him she ran to open the window, saying, "It's so hot here!" and she followed him with her eyes as long as she could perceive the plume on his hat.

At last she sat down again and resumed her spinning. But a rhyme she had often heard her old godmother sing came into her mind, and she sang—

"Run without stopping, spindle dear,
See that thou bring my true love here!"

And what happened? The spindle sprang suddenly from her hands and rushed out at the door. She followed it with her eyes, quite stupefied with wonder. It ran and danced across the fields, leaving a thread of gold behind it. In a little while it was too far for her to see. Having no spindle, she took her shuttle, and began to weave.

The spindle ran on and on, and by the time its thread was all unwound it had overtaken the prince. "What do I see?" he cried. "This spindle wants to conduct me somewhere." And turning his horse he galloped back, guided by the golden thread. The young girl continued the working, singing the while—

"Run to meet him, shuttle dear;
See thou guide my bridegroom here."

Then the shuttle sprang from her hands and hopped out at the door. But arrived on the threshold, it began to weave the most splendid carpet ever seen. On each side were garlands of roses and lilies, and in the centre green vines grew out of a golden ground. Hares and rabbits were represented jumping in the leaves, and stags and squirrels looked out from among them. On the branches were perched birds of a thousand hues, who only wanted voice to make them perfect. The shuttle went on running, and the carpet weaving advanced marvellously.

As she had lost her shuttle the young girl took her needle, and began singing—

"He's coming, he's coming, my needle dear;
See thou that all things are ready here."

The needle jumped from her fingers and began running round the room as quick as lightning. It was as if little invisible spirits had taken up the matter; the tables and benches covered themselves with green tapestry, the chairs were dressed in velvet, and silken hangings appeared on the walls.

Scarcely had the needle pierced its last stitch when the girl saw the white plume of the prince's hat pass the

window. He had been brought back by the golden thread. He entered the room, stepping over the carpet, and there he saw the young girl still dressed in her poor clothes, but shining among all this sudden splendour like a wild rose on a bush. "Thou art at once the poorest and the richest," he cried. "Come, thou shalt be my wife." She held out her hand to him without replying. He gave her a kiss, lifted her on his horse, and carried her off to the court, where their wedding was celebrated with great rejoicings.

As for the spindle, the shuttle, and the needle, they were carefully preserved in the royal treasury.

THE PEASANT AND SATAN

THERE was once upon a time a sharp-witted little peasant whose peccadilloes were much talked about. The best story told about him, however, was that of his once getting the better of Satan himself and making a fool of him.

The little peasant one day had put his acres in order and was preparing to go home in the twilight, when he caught sight of a pile of red-hot coals in the middle of one of his fields.

Full of astonishment, he went to see what it was, and found a little black demon sitting among the coals. "You are sitting on a bonfire of treasures," remarked the peasant.

"Yes, of course," answered Satan; "the treasure beneath the coals is worth more silver and gold than you have seen in the whole course of your life."

"Well, then, as it lies in my field it belongs to me," answered the peasant.

"It shall be yours," said Satan, "if for two years you give me the half of the produce of your acres. I have as much money as I want, but I cherish a longing for the firstfruits of the earth."

The little peasant agreed to the bargain.

"But so that there shall be no disputes," he added, "with regard to the division, you shall have for your share what

grows above the earth, and I will take for mine what grows under it."

Satan was agreeable to the arrangement, but the cunning peasant had sown turnips.

When the time for harvest came Satan appeared to fetch his crops, but found nothing but faded yellow leaves, and the little peasant, well satisfied, dug up his turnips. "You have got the best of it this time," said Satan, "but it shall not happen again. In future your share shall be what grows above the earth and mine what grows beneath."

"Very well," said the peasant. But when the time for sowing arrived the peasant sowed oats instead of turnips.

The fields were ripe for harvest, and the peasant came and cut down his oats to the roots. Satan, when he found nothing left but stubble, rushed away into a cave in the rocks in a furious rage.

"So one must be even with sly foxes," said the peasant, and went and fetched his treasure.

THE BREADCRUMBS

THE cock once said to his darling hen, "Our mistress is out on a visit, so let us go into her parlour and pick up the breadcrumbs on the table."

The hen replied, "No, I won't come. You know she disapproves of our being in the house."

Then the cock said, "She will not find out that we've been in. You know it is too bad that she never gives us nice tit-bits to eat."

But the little hen shook her head. "No, no," she said, "our mistress is out, but she might come back at any time, and then we should be discovered."

Still the cock insisted on trying to persuade the little hen, and at last she yielded. They went into the parlour and picked the breadcrumbs off the table. Their mistress came in unexpectedly, and when she saw what they were doing she seized a stick and chased them angrily out of the room.

When they were outside in the yard again the little

hen said to the cock, "Cluck, cluck. Did I not tell you so?"

But the naughty cock only laughed and said, "Cock-a-doodle-do."

THE SEAL

THERE was once a king's daughter who had an apartment high up under the gables with twelve windows that looked out on all points of the compass. Out of the first window she could see more clearly than most people, out of the second even better, out of the third plainer still, and so on to the twelfth, from which she could see simply everything on the earth and under it.

She was excessively haughty, and wished to rule supreme, so she vowed no one should marry her unless he could hide himself somewhere where it was impossible for her to find him. Whoever tried to hide and his hiding-place was discovered by her was to have his head cut off and stuck on a stake. Already there was a row of from seventy to ninety heads ranged in front of the castle, and no one had volunteered to hide himself for a very long time. This pleased the princess, and she thought, "I shall remain single and free for the rest of my days."

Then on a certain day three brothers appeared and announced their desire to try their luck. The eldest thought he would be safely hidden if he crept in a chalk-hole, but the princess saw him there from her first window, had him brought out, and his head cut off.

The second brother crept into the castle cellar, and it was all up with him, because he, too, was seen from the first window. His head was stuck on the ninety-ninth paling.

Then the youngest came in and asked the princess if she would graciously grant him a day for consideration, and also let him have three trials. If she found him twice and allowed him to hide once more and he was not successful a third time, then he would consent to his head being cut off without a murmur.

Because he was very handsome and entreated so earnestly she said, "Yes, I will grant your request; but, believe me, nothing will come of it."

The next day he reflected a long time as to where he should hide, but could think of no good place. At last he seized his gun and went out hunting. He saw a raven and took aim at it.

He was in the act of firing when the raven cried, "Don't shoot me and I will reward you." He lowered his gun, went on, and came to a lake, where he surprised a huge fish who had come up from the bottom to float on the surface of the water.

When he was within gunshot of it the fish spoke: "Don't shoot me and I will reward you one day." He allowed the fish to dive out of reach and went on till he met a fox that limped.

He fired and missed him, whereupon the fox called out, "Come here, please, and take this thorn out of my foot."

He did as the fox asked, but all the same thought of killing it and taking its skin away.

The fox said, "Spare me, and I will reward you one day." The youth let him go, and as it was now evening went home.

The next day he was to hide, but though he racked his brains he couldn't think where to go.

He went into the wood and spoke to the raven. "I spared your life," he said, "now tell me where I can creep away so that the princess can't see me." The raven bowed its head and meditated a long time.

At last it snapped out, "I have thought of something." The raven then fetched an egg from the nest, cut it in half, and put the youth inside; then it closed the two halves and sat on it.

When the princess looked out of her first window she couldn't see him. Neither could she see him from the second, and she began to be alarmed; but by the time she reached the eleventh window she saw him. She ordered the raven to be shot, the egg to be fetched and broken, and the youth was obliged to come out.

She said, "This time you may escape, but if you don't do better soon your life will not be spared."

The next day he went to the lake, called the fish, and said, "I let you live, so come and tell me where I can hide and not be discovered by the princess."

The fish reflected, then exclaimed, "I know! I'll swallow you." He proceeded to do this, and then dived again to the bottom of the lake.

The king's daughter looked out of her windows, and at the eleventh was terribly upset because she hadn't yet discovered him. At the twelfth, however, she detected him. She commanded the fish to be caught and killed, and the youth came forth.

It is easy to imagine his feelings. The princess said, "Twice you have been spared, but now I expect your head is certain to adorn the hundredth paling."

The next day he went with a heavy heart across the fields and met the fox. "You know all sorts of secret crannies," he said to the fox; "now counsel me as to where I am to hide."

"A difficult piece of advice to give," answered the fox thoughtfully. At last he shouted, "I have it!"

He went to a well, dipped in it, and came out a market-gardener and animal dealer. The youth was obliged to dip in the water, too, and came out a small seal.

Many people crowded to see the little animal which the merchant brought into the town to exhibit. The princess was among the number, and she was so delighted with it that she bought it for a large sum of money.

Before the merchant handed it over he said to the animal, "Directly the princess goes to look out of the window creep under her pigtail."

When the time came the princess stepped to her windows and looked out of the whole row from the first to the eleventh, and didn't see a sign of him. When she came to the twelfth and still couldn't see him her fury knew no bounds, and she shut it with such a terrific bang that all the glass in the other windows was smashed to atoms and the whole castle shook to its foundations. She went back to her chair and felt the seal crawling under her pigtail. She caught hold of it roughly, flung it on the ground, and said, "Get out of my sight."

It ran to the merchant, and together they both dipped

themselves in the well again and came out in their original shapes.

The youth thanked the fox and said, "The raven and the fish are stupid idiots compared with you. You know a trick worth all theirs."

The youth then went straight back to the castle. The king's daughter was waiting for him and resigned herself to her fate.

The wedding was celebrated and he became lord and master of the whole kingdom. He never told her where he had hidden the third time or who had helped him. She concluded, therefore, that he had managed it by his own wits alone, and so respected and looked up to him as being cleverer than herself.

THE MASTER-THIEF

One day an old man sat with his wife in front of their poverty-stricken cottage, resting after a hard day's work, when a handsome carriage with four horses drew up, and a well-dressed gentleman descended from it. The peasant got up, and advancing to the stranger, asked what his wishes were and whether he could be of service to him.

The stranger offered him his hand and said, "All I wish is, for once to enjoy a country meal. Prepare me some potatoes as you are in the habit of having them prepared, and let me join you at table, and I shall devour them with gusto."

The peasant smiled and said, "You, a count or a prince, or perhaps a duke! Well, I know aristocratic people do take it into their heads sometimes to play at being poor. Your wish shall be fulfilled by all means."

So the wife was sent into the kitchen to wash and peel the potatoes, and then she made dumplings such as the peasants eat.

While she was thus engaged, the peasant remarked to the stranger, "Come with me into my garden, where I have still a job to do."

In the garden he had dug holes, into which he was now going to plant trees.

"Have you no children to help you?" asked the stranger.

"No," the man replied. "I have had one son, it is true, but he went out into the world many years ago. He was a self-willed lad, clever enough, but he wouldn't learn anything, and played many silly pranks. At last he ran away, and since I have heard nothing of him."

The old peasant took up a tree and put it in one of the holes, with a stake to support it, and when he had shaken in earth and levelled it he bound the tree firmly to the stake with straw.

"Tell me," said the stranger, "why don't you bind that bent, crooked tree in the corner that hangs down almost on the ground, so that it might have a chance of growing straight too?"

The old man smiled.

"You talk as one might expect from a man who knows nothing about gardening. That tree is gnarled and old; no one could make it straight now. Trees can only be trained while they are young."

"It is the same in your son's case," said the stranger. "If you had trained him when he was young, he would not have gone off, perhaps, and left you as he did. By this time he is hard and gnarled too, and no longer pliable."

"Naturally," answered the old man, "it is now many years since he ran away. He must have altered in every way."

"Should you know him again if you happened to meet him?" asked the stranger.

"I don't think I should recognise his face," said the peasant, "but he had a birth-mark on his shoulder, the size and shape of a bean. I should know him by that."

He had no sooner spoken the words than the visitor stripped off his coat and shirt and showed the peasant the bean.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the old man, "you are really my son," and he felt his heart go out in love towards his child. "Tell me," he went on, "how it is my son has become a grand gentleman living in luxury. By what means did you acquire wealth?"

"Ah, my father," answered the son, "the young tree, remember, was not bound to a stake, but allowed to grow crooked. Now he is too old and cannot be made straight. How have I acquired wealth? I took to thieving as a profession—don't be shocked. I am a master-thief. For me locks and bolts simply don't exist, and everything I may fancy is mine instantly. You mustn't suppose that I steal like a common thief; I only rob the rich who have more than they know what to do with. Poor people are safe in my hands. I give to them more willingly than I take. Anything that does not require art, skill, and stratagem to obtain, I leave alone."

"Alas, my son!" said the father, "I cannot say it doesn't pain me to hear how you make your living, whatever you be, a common or a master-thief. A thief's a thief; and I know you'll come to a bad end."

He then led him to his mother, who, when she was told this distinguished-looking stranger was her son, wept for joy. But on learning that he was also a thief, her tears flowed freely. At last she said, "Even if he is a thief, he is my son too, and I cannot help being glad that my eyes have seen him once again."

They sat down to table together, and he enjoyed his parents' humble fare, the like of which he had not tasted for so long. The father then said—

"The count, who lives in the castle over there, if he had known what your career was to be, would not have taken you in his arms and been your sponsor at the font, but would rather instead that you had swung on the gallows."

"Don't fear that he will find out anything, father," said the son, "for I understand my trade. I will go and call on him myself to-night."

So when the evening drew on the master-thief had the horses put in and drove to the count's castle. He was received courteously because he was such a distinguished-looking person. But when the stranger revealed who he was the count grew pale, and was silent for a long time. At last he said, "You are my godson, so I will extend mercy rather than show justice towards you. As you boast that you are a master-thief, I will put your skill to the test. If you cannot come through it unscathed you must be

wedded to the rope-maker's daughter, and the caw of the crows will supply the wedding music."

"My lord," answered the master-thief, "think of three things of surpassing difficulty, and if I don't perform them I will agree to swing for it."

The count reflected for some minutes, then he said—

"First, you must steal the horse I always ride out of the stable; secondly, when I and my wife are asleep in bed you must take the sheet from under us, and at the same time the wedding-ring from my wife's finger; thirdly, you shall steal the parson and the parish clerk from the church and bring them to me. Now, take heed of the items, for your neck is at stake."

The master-thief went on to the next town. There he bought from an old peasant woman her clothes and arrayed himself in them. Then he stained his face brown and painted in wrinkles, so that no one could possibly have recognised him. Finally, he filled a small barrel with old Hungarian wine, which was mixed with a strong narcotic. He put the barrel in a knapsack that he carried on his back, and went with deliberate, wavering steps towards the castle of the count.

It was quite dark by the time he got there, and he sat down on a stone in the courtyard and began to wheeze and cough like an asthmatical old woman, and rubbed his hands as if he were freezing. In front of the stable doors there were soldiers lying round a fire. One of them noticed the old woman and shouted to her, "Come nearer, mother, and warm yourself. You have apparently no night quarters and must make the best of what you find out of doors."

The old woman hobbled over to them, took off her knapsack, and squatted by the fire.

"What have you got in that barrel?" one of the soldiers asked.

"A good draught of wine," she answered. "I keep myself by selling it. I'll give you a glass willingly for kind words and money."

"Let us try it," said the soldier, and when he had tasted it he asked for another glass, and all the others followed his example.

"Look here, comrades," said the soldier to some one

inside the stable, "here's a granny with wine as old as herself. Have a snack; it will warm your stomach better than our fire."

The old woman then carried her wine into the stable, where a groom sat in the saddle of the count's horse, while another held the bridle, and a third had hold of the tail. She filled up for all three till her supply was exhausted.

A few minutes afterwards the bridle fell out of one groom's hands, the other relaxed his grasp on the horse's tail, and both began to snore. The third groom still sat in the saddle, but he began to nod till his head fell over the horse's neck, and all three snored terrifically.

The soldiers outside had fallen long ago into a stupor and were so motionless they might have been stones.

The master-thief, now seeing the coast clear, gave the man who had been holding the bridle a rope, and put a wisp of straw into the hand of the man who had held the tail; but what was to be done with the fellow sitting in the saddle? If he pulled him off, he might wake up and his cries would rouse the others.

A bright idea then occurred to him; he unbuckled the girths of the saddle, fastened ropes to rings on the wall and then to the saddle, and gradually hoisted the sleeping groom, saddle and all, in the air.

The horse was now easily unchained, but if its hoofs had been allowed to echo on the paved courtyard every one in the castle would have awoke, so he wrapped them in old rags and led the animal out cautiously, then mounted and galloped off.

At daybreak the master-thief cantered up to the castle on the stolen steed. The count had just got up and was looking out of the window.

"Good morning, my lord," he called up to him. "Look how peacefully your soldiers are sleeping on guard."

The count could not help laughing, and said, "Yes, you have succeeded the first time, but I doubt your doing so well the second. And I warn you that if you behave as such a daring thief, you will be treated according to your deserts."

That night, when the count and countess retired to rest, the latter firmly shut the hand on which she wore her

wedding-ring, and the count said, "All the doors are locked, barred, and bolted. I will keep watch for the thief, and if he attempts to get in at the window I'll shoot him down."

The master-thief went out to the gallows and cut down the body of a condemned sinner that hung there, and carried it on his back to the castle. There he placed a ladder under the windows of the sleeping-apartment, and with the dead man on his shoulders mounted it. When he had got high enough for the head of the dead man to appear at the window, the count discharged a pistol from his bed, and the thief let the corpse fall, sprang off the ladder into the room and hid in a corner.

It was such a bright moonlight night that the thief could see distinctly the count climb down the ladder into the garden, where he carried the dead body of the gallows-bird to a hole, which he dug deeper, and then buried him.

"Now," thought the thief, "is my opportunity."

He slunk on tiptoe into the countess's bedroom.

"Dear wife," he said, mimicking the count's voice, "the thief is dead, but he is, you know, my godson, and more rogue than scoundrel. I will not hold him up to public shame, for I have compassion with his poor parents. Before the day breaks I will bury him myself in the garden, so that the affair will not come out. Give me the bed-sheet and I will wrap his corpse in it and put him in the ground like a dog."

The countess gave him the sheet.

"And do you know," he continued, "I have in a generous fit decided that the ring for which he has sacrificed his life shall be buried with him."

The countess was not at all willing to agree to this, but because she didn't wish to run counter to her husband, she at last drew it from her finger and gave it to him.

The thief thus secured both articles and reached home with them safely long before the count had finished his burial operations in the garden.

The count pulled a very long face when the next morning the master-thief came and handed him the sheet and the ring.

"Are you a magician?" he said. "Who has raised you alive from the grave in which I laid you dead?"

"It wasn't I you buried," was the reply, "but a poor wretch off the gallows," and he related in detail all the events of the previous night.

The count was obliged to admit that a more consummate dodger never existed.

"But you haven't done all yet," said the count, "the third task is still to be accomplished."

The master-thief smiled and gave no answer.

When night came he departed for the village church with a sack under his arm, a bundle on his back, and a lantern in his hand. The sack contained crabs, the bundle tapers.

He sat down in the churchyard, took a crab out, and stuck a wax-taper on its back; he lit the taper and then let the crab crawl away. He took a second and a third crab out of the sack, served them the same way, and went on till the sack was empty and all the wax-tapers used. Then he put on a long black cassock, and stuck a grizzled beard on his chin.

When he was quite disguised, he took the sack in which the crabs had been, entered the church, and mounted the pulpit. The clock in the church-tower struck twelve. Just as the last stroke had sounded, he cried in a loud, shrill voice, "Listen, all ye sinners! The end of all things is at hand; the last day is coming. Listen! Whoever wants to go to heaven, let him creep into my sack. I am Peter, who keeps the door of Paradise. Look yonder at the churchyard, where the dead are collecting their bones. Come, come and get in the sack, the world is going to burst up!"

His shouts echoed through the whole village. The parson and the clerk, who lived nearest the church, had seen the lights wandering in the churchyard and were the first to repair to the church.

They listened a while to the harangue, and then the parson nudged the clerk and said—

"I rather like the idea of getting into heaven in this comfortable, easy fashion before the last day dawns."

"So do I," answered the clerk. "If you'll allow me, I'll lead the way."

So he mounted the pulpit, where the master opened the

sack. The parson followed and crept into the sack first, the clerk respectfully giving him precedence.

When both were inside the master quickly closed the sack, took it up by the middle, and dragged it down the pulpit steps. Whenever the two idiots bumped their heads, the master exclaimed, "We are on the mountains now."

Then he dragged them through the village, and when they came to pools, he said, "These are the wet clouds;" and when they arrived at the castle steps, he said, "Here is the staircase to heaven at last!"

Then he pushed them into the pigeon-house, and on the pigeons making a great flutter with their wings, he remarked, "Hark, that is the angels welcoming you." Then he drew the bolt and went away.

The next morning he came to the count and announced that he had achieved the third feat, and stolen the parson and the parish clerk from the church.

"Where are they?" asked the count.

"They repose in a sack locked up in the pigeon-house, where they imagine they are in heaven."

The count went out to see with his own eyes whether the thief was speaking the truth. He let the parson and the clerk out of their captivity, and then said, "There can now be no manner of doubt that you are an arch-thief. You have won all along the line, and this time you escape with a whole skin. But make haste and clear off, and be careful never to enter my domain again; for if you do, you will be hung on the gallows without more ado."

So the arch-thief took his leave, and after bidding his parents farewell went out into the wide world, and was never seen or heard of again.

THE DRUMMER

One evening a young drummer was walking by himself in the fields. He came to a lake, where he found on the bank three little bits of white linen. "This is extraordinarily fine linen," he said, and put a bit in his pocket. He then went home, and without thinking any more about his find lay down in bed.

Just as he was composing himself to sleep he fancied some one called his name. He listened, and then a low voice fell distinctly on his ear. "Drummer, drummer, wake up!" it said.

The night was so dark he could see no one, but he felt as if a figure was floating up and down at the bottom of his bed. "What do you want?" he asked.

"Give me back my chemise that you took away last night from the shore."

"You shall have it," answered the drummer, "if you tell me who you are."

"Ah!" said the voice, "I am the daughter of a mighty king, but I am in the power of a witch, and I am banished to the glass-mountain. Every day I have to bathe in the lake with my two sisters, but without my chemise I can't fly away again. My sisters have flown off long ago, but I am obliged to stay behind. I implore you to give me back my chemise."

"Be calm, child," said the drummer, "I will give it to you, of course."

He went and took it out of his pocket and handed it to her. She seized it eagerly, and turned to go.

"Wait a minute," said he, "perhaps I can help you."

"You can only help me," she replied, "by mounting the glass-mountain and delivering me out of the hands of the witch. But you couldn't possibly do it; even if you were quite close to the mountain you couldn't climb it."

"Where there is a will, there's a way," said the drummer. "I pity you, and fear nothing. But I don't know the way to the glass-mountain."

"The path lies through a forest inhabited by cannibals, that is all I may tell you," she answered. And then he heard her flit away.

At daybreak the drummer got up, slung on his drum, and went fearlessly into the cannibal forest. After he had gone a little distance he looked round but saw no giants. He thought, "I must wake up the sluggards," and he beat a tattoo on his drum which frightened the birds.

In a few minutes a giant who had been lying in the grass reared his huge form, and stood there as tall as a pine-tree. "You rascal!" he exclaimed. "what do you mean by

beating your drum and waking me out of my beauty sleep?"

"I am beating the drum," he answered, "because a thousand men are coming behind who want to know the way."

"What are they doing in my forest?" asked the giant.

"They intend, for one thing, to annihilate you, and cleanse the forest from all such monsters."

"Oh. indeed," said the giant, "I'll trample them all dead like so many ants."

"Do you think you could catch them?" said the drummer contemptuously. "If you stooped to pick up one he would be off like a shot and hide himself, and if you lay down to sleep, hundreds would creep out of the bushes and climb on your body; and as they are all armed with steel hammers they would make short work of beating in your skull."

The giant grew morose, and thought, "It is difficult to know how to deal with these small, cunning folk. With wolves and bears I am at home, but I am at a loss what tactics to adopt with earth-worms." "Look here," he said aloud, "if you little fellow will go away now, I promise that I will never molest you and your comrades in the future, and if you have any particular wish just now that I can fulfil, tell me, and I will see what I can do for you."

"You have long legs," said the drummer, "and can run faster than I can. Carry me to the glass-mountain, and I will signal to my men to retreat and leave you in peace."

"Come here, then, little worm," said the giant, "seat yourself on my shoulder, and I will carry you wherever you want to go."

The giant lifted him up and the drummer began to play his drum from sheer joy. The giant thought this was his signal for the others to withdraw.

After a time a second giant stood in the path, who took the drummer away from the first giant and put him in his button-hole. The drummer held on to the button, which was as big as a dish, and felt in quite good spirits still.

Then they came to a third giant, who took him out of the

other's button-hole, and put him on the brim of his hat. The drummer promenaded up and down, and could see away over the tree-tops, and catching sight of a mountain in the blue distance, he thought to himself, "That is the glass-mountain for certain," and it was. The giant had only to take a few strides to get to the foot of it.

When the giant put him down the drummer desired him to carry him to the top, but the giant muttered something in his beard, and went back into the forest. There stood the poor drummer in front of the mountain that was so high; it was like three ordinary mountains placed one on top of the other, and as transparent and smooth, besides, as a mirror. He didn't know what to do. He tried to climb but in vain, for he always tumbled back. "If only I was a bird now," he thought; but what was the good of wishing such a thing, it didn't make wings grow.

As he stood there, not knowing how he should act, he caught sight of two men fighting. He went up to them, and saw the bone of contention was a saddle lying on the ground.

"What fools you are," he said, "to quarrel about a saddle when you have no horse to put it on."

"The saddle is worth quarrelling about," replied one of the men. "If any one sits on it, and wishes himself somewhere, even at the end of the world, he'll be there in half a jiffy. The saddle is the joint property of both of us. It is my turn to ride on it, but he will not let me."

"I will settle the dispute," said the drummer. He went a few paces off and stuck a white pole into the ground. Then he came back, and said, "Now, then, run to the pole, and who reaches it first will have the first right to the saddle."

Both started, but they had not run many steps before the drummer swung himself into the saddle and wished himself at the top of the glass-mountain. In a twinkling he was there. An old stone house stood on the very top, n front of which was a large fish-pond, and beneath it a dense, dark wood. He did not see a sign of man or beast, and it was all silent except for the rustling of the trees. The clouds seemed very close over his head.

He knocked at the door of the house, and not till he had knocked three times did an old woman with brown face and pink eyes open it. She had spectacles on her long nose, and she scanned him sharply. Then she asked what his business was, and he asked for board and lodging. "You shall have it," replied the old lady, "if you work for it. I will set you three tasks."

"Why not?" said the drummer, "I don't shirk any work, and I don't care how hard it is."

The old woman then admitted him, and gave him a good supper and a comfortable bed.

In the morning when he had had his sleep out, she took a thimble from her shrivelled finger, and handing it to the drummer, said, "Take this thimble and bale out the water in the pond with it till there isn't a drop left. The work must be completed by night, and all the fish arranged according to their kind and size on the bank."

"A curious task," commented the drummer. He went to the pond and began to bale. He worked hard at it the whole morning, but what was the good of trying to empty a large piece of water with a thimble? It would take a thousand years at least. At dinner time he gave it up as a bad job, saying to himself, "It is all the same whether I work or not," so he sat down.

Then a maiden came out of the house and placed a basket of food before him. "How sad you seem!" she said. "Is anything the matter?"

He looked at her and saw she was exceedingly beautiful. "Alas!" he exclaimed, "I cannot perform the first task she has given me. How shall I ever be able to perform the other two? I came here to seek a princess, but I have not seen her yet."

"Wait here," said the girl, "I will help you out of your quandary. You are tired; lay your head in my lap and sleep, and when you wake up the thing will be done."

The drummer was only too charmed to obey.

Directly his eyes closed the girl twisted a wishing-ring, and exclaimed, "Water, come up. Fish, come out."

The water immediately rose like a white mist and mingled with the other clouds, and the fish jumped on

to the bank and ranged themselves on the bank in order of size and colour.

When the drummer awoke he saw with amazement what had happened.

The girl said, "One of the fish is not lying by his fellows, but is quite alone. If the old woman comes this evening to see if all has been done as she ordered, she will at once say, 'What is this fish doing here?' Then throw the fish in her face, and say, 'It is for you, old witch.'"

Evening came, and when the old woman came and asked the question, he threw the fish in her face. She stood as if she did not notice the insult and said nothing, but her eyes blinked maliciously.

The next morning she remarked, "Yesterday you had too easy a time of it, I must give you harder work. To-day you must cut down the whole wood, cut up the timber, arrange it into faggots, and everything must be ready by the evening." She gave him an axe, a hatchet, and two saws, but they were all made of lead.

He didn't know what to do, but the maiden arrived at dinner-time with his food, and said, "Lay your head in my lap, go to sleep, and when you wake the work will be finished."

She twirled her wish-ring on her finger, and the whole wood collapsed with one fearful crackle, as if invisible giants had been felling it.

He awoke, and the girl said, "Look! the timber is all severed and arranged in faggots. Only one branch lies apart; when the old woman comes to-night, take it and give her a blow with it, and say, 'That's for you, old witch.'"

The old woman came. "You see," she said, "how very easy is the work I give you. But what is that branch doing there?"

He took it up and gave her a bang with it, saying, "That's for you, old witch." But she appeared not to feel it, only laughed mockingly.

"To-morrow," she said, "you shall collect all the faggots, pile them up, and set fire to them."

He rose at dawn and began to collect the wood, but how

was it possible for a single man to gather together a whole forest? His labour made no progress. Well for him that his friend the girl did not leave him in the lurch! She brought his dinner, and when he had eaten it he put his head in her lap and went to sleep. On waking the whole vast mass of timber was alight, the flames reaching to the sky.

"Listen," said the girl, "when the witch comes she will impose on you again. Do what she asks you without fear, so that you give her no cause for complaint. If you are the least bit afraid she will seize you and pitch you into the furnace. When you have done as she bids you, you can end by catching hold of her and throwing her on the flames."

The girl departed, and the old witch came. "Fire! I am freezing!" she exclaimed, "but that nice fire will warm my old bones. But look, there's a log that won't burn, fetch it out. If you can do that, you are free to wander where you please, so jump in gaily."

The drummer did not hesitate a moment, sprang into the middle of the flames, and they did not even singe his hair. He dragged out the log and laid it down. Hardly had it touched the earth than it changed into the charming girl who had helped him out of his difficulties, and by the golden draperies she now wore he knew she was the princess.

The old woman laughed. "You think," she jeered, "that you've got her, but I tell you, you haven't yet."

She was in the act of rushing at the girl to take her away, when the drummer seized her with both hands and flung her into the fire, the great flames licking her up as if they enjoyed devouring so notorious a witch.

The princess then looked critically at the drummer, and having duly considered that he was certainly a handsome youth who had risked his life for her sake, she held out her hand to him, and said, "You have dared everything for me. Promise to be my true love, and I will marry you. We shall not want for riches, for here are more than enough." She led him into the house and showed him the great chests and cupboards, filled with the treasures the witch had accumulated. They left all the gold and silver and only took the precious stones.

As they didn't wish to linger on the glass-mountain any longer, he said to her, "Seat yourself in my saddle, and we can fly down together like birds."

"I don't like that old saddle," she replied, "I have only to turn my wishing-ring and we shall be at home."

"All right," said the drummer, "wish us in front of the city gates."

In a second they were there, and the drummer said, "First I will go to my parents and tell them all the news. Wait for me here in this field and I will soon be back."

"Ah!" cried the princess, "I implore you to be careful. On no account kiss your parents on the right cheek, else you will forget everything, and I shall have to stay here deserted and alone."

"How could I possibly forget you?" he said, and gave her his right hand and promised that he would soon return.

When he entered the paternal dwelling no one recognised him, he was so altered, for the three days he had spent on the glass-mountain had really been three years.

Then he revealed who he was, and his parents in their delight fell on his neck, and he was so touched that he kissed them on both cheeks, forgetting the maiden's injunction. Directly he had kissed the right cheek of his parents all thought of the princess left him. He emptied his pockets, and laid handfuls of pearls and diamonds on the table. The parents didn't know what to do with all this wealth. At last the father built a superb castle, surrounded by gardens, fields, and woods fit for a prince to live in. And when it was ready the mother said to the drummer, "I have chosen a bride for you, and we will fix the wedding for this day week." The son expressed himself quite content.

The poor princess meanwhile had waited a long time in the field before the city gates. When evening came, and he did not return, she felt convinced that he had kissed his parents on the right cheek and forgotten all about her. Her heart was very heavy, and she wished herself in a lonely forest-house and not at her father's court. Every evening she walked into the town and passed his house; many times the youth saw her without

knowing her again. At last she heard people saying, "To-morrow, he is to be married." And she thought, "I will make an effort to win him back."

On the first day of the wedding festivities she twirled her ring, and said, "I want a dress that shines like the sun." At once the garment lay before her, and looked as if it had been woven out of sunbeams.

When the guests were assembled she entered the hall. Every one was struck dumb at the beauty of her dress, especially the bride herself, who had a passion for fine clothes. She went up to the stranger and asked if she would sell her gown.

"Not for money," was the answer, "but if I may linger all night beside the door of the room in which the bridegroom is going to sleep, I will give the dress with pleasure."

The bride could not resist the offer, and consented to the arrangement, but first she mixed the bridegroom a sleeping-draught with his nightly wine, which sent him into a deep slumber.

When the house was quiet the princess crouched before the door of the sleeping apartment, opened it a little, and called—

"Drummer, drummer, listen to me.
Have you forgotten me quite?
Did you not sit beside me on the mountain height?
Did I not save you from the witch's wiles?
And you plighted your troth with smiles?
Drummer, drummer, listen to me."

But it was all no use, the drummer did not wake, and when morning dawned the princess was obliged to own herself unsuccessful and go away.

The second evening she turned her ring, and said, "I want a dress as silver as the moon."

When she appeared in draperies as soft and filmy as moonbeams, she again excited the envy of the bride, who accepted it as a present, and granted the wearer permission to spend another night outside the bridegroom's door.

In the stillness of the night she called again—

"Drummer, drummer, listen to me.
Have you forgotten me quite?
Did you not sit beside me on the mountain height?

Did I not save you from the witch's wiles ?
And didn't you plight your troth with smiles ?
Drummer, drummer, listen to me."

But the drummer, stupefied by the sleeping-draught, was not to be awakened, and in the morning the princess went sorrowfully back to her forest-house.

But some of the servants in the house had heard the strange girl's sad lament and told the bridegroom about it ; they told him that he must have heard it if he had not been drugged with the sleeping-draught that had been mixed with his night-cap.

The third evening the princess turned her ring, and said, " I want a dress that flashes like the stars."

When she appeared at the ball the bride was in ecstacies over the new dress, which she admired even more than the other two. She said, " I must, and will have it," and the owner consented to give it to her on the same conditions.

This time the bridegroom didn't drink the wine on retiring to rest, but poured it under the bed. When all the house was still he heard a soft voice saying—

" Drummer, drummer, listen to me.
Have you forgotten me quite ?
Did you not sit beside me on the mountain height ?
Did I not save you from the witch's wiles ?
And didn't you plight your troth with smiles ?
Drummer, drummer, listen to me."

Suddenly his memory returned. " Ah," he cried, " how faithless and cruel I have been ! But the kiss which in the joy of my heart I pressed on my parents' right cheek is really to blame." He jumped up, took the princess by the hand, and led her to his parents' bedside. " Here is my true bride," he said ; " if I marry the other I shall do her a great wrong."

The parents when the whole matter was explained to them were ready enough to have the princess for their daughter-in-law.

The wedding festivities began over again, and the first bride was allowed to keep the three lovely dresses as compensation, and expressed herself satisfied.

THE EAR OF CORN

In olden times, when God himself wandered about in the world, the earth was ten times more productive than it is at present. Then the corn was laden with ears from the root of the stem to the very top, and the length of each ear equalled that of the stalk itself. But when men live in such prosperity they are not mindful of their blessings, and are apt to be frivolous and indifferent towards God.

One day a woman was crossing a cornfield with her little girl, who fell down in a rut and made her frock dirty. The mother tore off a handful of the beautiful wheat-ears and began to rub the soiled frock clean with them.

The Lord, who happened to be coming that way, saw this and was wroth. "Henceforth," he said, "the stalk of the corn shall bear no more ears. Men are no longer worthy of this bountiful gift of Heaven."

The bystanders heard and were greatly alarmed. They fell on their knees and implored that the stalk might still at least bear ears at the top, for the sake of the poor innocent chickens, if not for their own.

The Lord saw the justice of the plea, and mercifully granted it. So from that day the ears have grown at the top of the stalk only, as they do now.

THE GRAVE-MOUND

A rich peasant stood one day in his yard surveying his gardens and fields. The corn was growing fast and the trees were laden with fruit. The grain of last year lay in such mighty heaps in the loft that the beams could hardly bear the weight of it all. He then went into the stable, where were the powerful oxen, the fat cows, and the sleek, shiny horses. At last he went back to his parlour and cast his eye over the iron chests in which his money lay.

As he thus took stock of his wealth there was a great

knocking, not on the door of his house, but on the door of his heart. He opened it and a voice said, "Have you done well in thus accumulating riches? Have you helped the poor and visited the distressed? Have you shared your bread with the hungry? Were you ever satisfied with what you had? Didn't you always long for more?"

His heart did not hesitate to reply, "I have been hard and relentless, and have never shown any kindness to my relations. If a poor man came to my door I turned him away. I have never given a thought to God and have devoted all my time and energies to the increase of my fortune. If everything in heaven and earth had belonged to me I shouldn't have been satisfied."

When he heard his heart give this answer he trembled and his knees shook to such an extent he was obliged to sit down.

Then there was another knock, but this time on the door of his room. It was his neighbour, a poor man with a heap of children whom he didn't know how to feed.

"I know," thought the poor man, "that my neighbour is as hard and unpitying as he is rich; but the children are clamouring for bread, so I will ask for his help, though I don't expect to get it." He said aloud to the rich man, "You aren't inclined ever to give anything away, I know; but I am desperate and like a man drowning. My children are starving, lend me, I pray, four quarters of corn."

The rich man contemplated him in silence a long while. Then the first sunbeam of compassion thawed the ice of his avarice. "I will not *lend* you four quarters," he said. "I will make you a present of the corn; but on one condition."

"What can that be?" said the poor man.

"That when I am dead you shall watch by my grave for three nights."

"What am I to do?" said the poor man.

"Watch three nights by my grave when I am dead."

The peasant felt uncomfortable at the suggestion, but in his miserable plight he dared not object, but agreed to the conditions, and carried off his corn.

It seemed as if the rich man had had a presentiment of what was going to happen, for a few days later he fell

down dead quite suddenly. No one understood what he had died of, and no one mourned for him.

When he was interred the poor man remembered his promise, and would willingly have been released from it, but he thought, "He was so benevolent and good to me, and I have filled my hungry children's stomachs with his corn, and even if it were not so I gave my word and must abide by it."

So when night fell he went to the churchyard and seated himself on the grave-mound. It was all perfectly still; the moon shone on the graves, and now and then an owl flew by with a melancholy hoot. When the sun rose the poor man's vigil ended, and unhurt he returned home.

It was the same on the second night, but on the third he was seized with terror, as if something uncanny were going to happen. When he entered the churchyard he saw a man in the shadow of the wall whom he did not know by sight. He was no longer young, had scars on his face, and looked round him with fiery, restless eyes. He was enveloped in a shabby cloak, and only his riding-boots were visible beneath.

"What are you searching for here?" said the peasant, addressing him. "Doesn't the deserted churchyard make you shudder?"

"I am searching for nothing, neither do I fear anything. I am like the boy who went out to learn to shudder and took the trouble in vain. The difference is that he was rewarded with the hand of a princess and great riches, whereas I remain poor and grow poorer. I am nothing but a discharged soldier, and will spend the night here, because I have no other shelter."

"If you are not afraid," said the peasant, "come and help me keep watch by yonder grave."

"Watching is part of a soldier's business," he answered. "Whatever we encounter here, whether good or evil spirits, we will face together."

The peasant acquiesced and they went and sat side by side on the grave.

All remained silent and still till midnight, when a low, long whistle suddenly fell on their ears, and on looking round they saw the Evil One himself. "Away with you,

you skulkers!" he said. "He who lies in this grave is mine, and if you don't go away instantly I'll wring your necks."

"Gentleman of the red feather," said the soldier, "you are not my commanding officer, so I need not obey you, and I have no fear of you. Go your way and leave us alone."

The devil thought, "You'll win over the two ruffians, with money," and then in soft, honeyed tones he asked them if they would not accept a bag of money and go quietly home.

"The matter is worthy of consideration," replied the soldier, "but we certainly should not be satisfied with only one bag of money. If you will give us as much as one of my top-boots will hold we'll vacate the field in your favour."

"I haven't got enough with me," said the devil, "but if you'll wait I can fetch it from a money-lender in the next town. He is a great friend of mine and will let me have any amount."

When the devil had gone to the town the soldier drew off his left boot and said, "We'll be even with him; just give me your knife, guv'nor." He cut the sole from his boot and placed it near the mound in some long grass on the edge of a half-open pit. "That's all right!" he exclaimed. "Now the chimney-sweep may come if he likes."

Both sat down and waited.

Before many minutes the devil came back with a bag of gold in his hand.

"Shake it in," directed the soldier, raising the boot slightly in the air; "that is not enough to fill it."

The black fellow emptied the bag, but the gold fell through the bottom and the boot had nothing in it.

"Stupid!" exclaimed the soldier, "that won't do. I told you so. Go back again and fetch more."

The devil grumbled, but went and returned later with a bigger bag under his arm.

"I doubt whether that will fill the boot either," the soldier said.

The coins clinked as they fell through, and the boot still remained empty.

The devil peeped in with his glittering eyes and convinced himself of the truth. "You have shamelessly roomy boots," he said, making a sour face.

"Anyhow," retorted the soldier, "I haven't a cloven foot like you! Look sharp and get more cash, else you will drive no bargain with us."

Once more the uncanny one departed, and when he came back this time he staggered under the weight of a sack he carried on his shoulder. He shook its contents into the boot, but it filled as little as before. He became furious, and tried to tear the boot out of the soldier's hand, but just at that very moment the sun rose in the heavens and the Evil One took flight with a loud shriek.

The poor soul of the rich man was saved.

The peasant then proposed dividing the money, but the soldier said—

"Give the poor my share. I will come with you in your hut, and we and the rest of your family will live together so long as God wills."

OLD RINKRANK

Once upon a time there lived a king who had a daughter. He ordered a glass mountain to be constructed, and said, "Whoever can walk over the mountain shall have my daughter."

Now the princess was very fond of one of the courtiers, and he came to the king and asked for her hand.

"You shall certainly marry her," replied the king, "if you can walk over the mountain."

The princess offered to go with him to help him up if he slipped.

So they both started over the mountain together. When they got to the middle the princess slipped and fell. The glass mountain suddenly opened and the princess disappeared.

The bridegroom looked for her everywhere in vain. He could not find the place where the mountain had opened, because it had shut up so quickly.

The king and the bridegroom lamented loudly, and

the king gave orders that the mountain should be pulled down on the spot, as he hoped that then the princess might be found. But there was no sign of her under the mountain.

Meanwhile the princess had descended into a very deep pit, where she met an old man with a tremendously long grey beard.

"If you will be my servant," he said to her, "and do what I tell you in an obliging manner you shall live, otherwise you must die."

So she did all the work he gave her willingly and cheerfully. The princess cooked his dinner, made his bed, and swept and cleaned the rooms.

At night he used to come home, bringing heaps of gold and silver.

After she had served him for a good many years he said, "I will call you Madame Rosy-Cheek and you must call me Old Rinkrank."

One day when he was out the princess washed up the dishes, made his bed, and shut all the windows and doors, except one little trap-door.

When Old Rinkrank came home he knocked and shouted out, "Madame Rosy-Cheek, open the door!" and she replied—

"No, Old Rinkrank, I will not open the door."

Then he cried—

"Here stands poor Old Rinkrank
On his seventeen long shanks,
And on his one golden foot.

Madame Rosy-Cheek, have you washed my dishes?"

"I have washed them," she replied.

Then he began again—

"Here stands poor old Rinkrank
On his seventeen long shanks,
And on his one golden foot.

Madame, have you made my bed?"

"Yes, I have," she answered.

Then he said once more—

"Here stands poor old Rinkrank
On his seventeen long shanks,
And on his one golden foot.

Madame Rosy-Cheek, open the door."

He walked round the house to see if the little trap-door was left open. As it was he put his long grey beard through it.

When Rosy-Cheek saw this, she quietly shut the trap-door, and Old Rinkrank began to howl and yell and pray to be let free.

But she said she would only give him his liberty on condition that he told her where he kept the ladder by which he climbed up on to the earth.

At first he refused to tell her, but as it was his only chance of getting out of the trap-door he was obliged to at last.

The princess was now able to go back to her father, for she fetched the ladder, tied old Rinkrank's beard fast to the trap-door, and went up the hole she had come down by.

The king and the bridegroom were, of course, overjoyed to see the princess again. They dug up the pit, killed Old Rinkrank, and seized all his gold and silver.

The princess married her faithful lover and they lived happily ever after.

THE CRYSTAL BALL

Once upon a time there was a sorceress who had three sons—the fondest of brothers; but the old woman did not trust them and thought they wanted to rob her of her power. So she changed the eldest into an eagle living on a rocky mount, and he was to be seen from time to time soaring up and down in great circles in the sky. She changed the second into a whale; he lived in the deep sea and could only be seen occasionally throwing up a huge spout of water. Each had their human form for only two hours every day. The third son, fearing she might turn him also into some savage animal—a bear, or a wolf—went off secretly. Now he had heard that in the Castle of the Golden Sun there dwelt an enchanted princess

waiting for deliverance ; but it was at the risk of one's life to attempt to deliver her. Twenty-three youths had already met with an untimely death, and only one more was allowed to try. As he was without fear he resolved to seek out the Castle of the Golden Sun. He had wandered for a long time without being able to discover it, when he found himself in a great forest, and did not know the way out of it. Suddenly he perceived two giants in the distance beckoning to him with their hands, and when he came up to them they said, "We are fighting over a hat, and as we are both equally strong, neither can get the better of the other ; the little people are cleverer than we, therefore we will leave you to decide."

"How can you fight over a hat?" said the youth.

"You do not know its properties ; it is a wishing-hat, and whoever puts it on can wish himself wherever he likes, and in an instant he is there."

"Give me the hat," said the youth ; "I will go a little way off, and when I call you, run as hard as you can, and who gets to me first shall have it." He put on the hat and walked off, but thinking of the princess he forgot all about the giants and went on and on. At last he sighed from the bottom of his heart, "Ah, if only I were at the Castle of the Golden Sun!" and the words were hardly out of his lips when he was standing on a high mountain before the gate of the castle. He stepped inside, and went through all the rooms until he found the princess in the last one. But he was quite shocked at the sight of her ; she had an ashen-grey face full of wrinkles, dull eyes, and red hair. "Are you the princess whose beauty is renowned throughout the land?" he cried.

"Ah," she replied, "this is not my own form, the eyes of men can only see me in this hideous guise, but in order that you may know how I really look, take a glance at the mirror which cannot be mistaken, and that will show you my picture as it is in reality." She handed him the looking-glass, and he saw in it the reflection of the most beautiful maiden in the world, and saw how the tears were rolling down her cheeks from sorrow.

Then he said, "How can you be released? No danger can prevent my trying."

She said, "Whoever gains the crystal ball and holds it before the magician, thereby breaks his power, and I return to my true form. Ah," she added, "so many have already gone to their death in the attempt, and you, young man, will repent when you find yourself in great perils."

"Nothing can keep me back," said he; "but tell me what I must do."

"You shall know all," said the princess; "if you go up the mountain on which the castle stands, you will see a wild bull standing in a stream below, with which you must fight. And if you are fortunate enough to kill him there will rise up out of him a fiery bird, carrying in its body a glowing egg which contains the crystal ball for a yolk. He will not let the egg fall, however, unless he is forced to, but if it should fall on to the ground it will catch fire and burn everything within reach, and the egg itself will melt away, and the crystal ball inside as well, and all your trouble will have been in vain."

The youth climbed down to the brook, where the bull was snorting and bellowing at him. After a long struggle he thrust his sword through the animal's body and he sank down. Instantly the fire-bird arose out of him and would have flown away, but the eagle, the youth's brother, who was hovering about in the clouds, swooped down on the bird, chased him out to the sea, and struck him with his beak, so that in his extremity he dropped the egg. However, it did not fall into the sea, but on to a fisherman's hut by the shore, which at once began to smoke and was ready to burst into flames. But there arose from the sea waves as high as a house, which flowed over the hut and extinguished the fire. The other brother, the whale, had come swimming along and spouted the water up. When the fire was quenched the youth looked for the egg, and fortunately found it; it had not yet been melted, but the shell was cracked from the sudden cooling by the cold water, and he could take the crystal ball out without any trouble.

When the youth went to the magician and held it before him, the magician said, "My power is destroyed, and from this time forward you are the king of the Castle

of the Golden Sun. You can also give your brothers back their human form with this."

So the youth then hastened to the princess, and when he entered her room found her standing there in the full splendour of her beauty, and both exchanged their rings joyfully with each other.

MAID MALINE

Once upon a time there was a king whose son aspired to the hand of a powerful king's daughter. She was called Maid Maline and was exceedingly beautiful. Because her father wished to give her to another, she was refused to him. But as both loved each other from their hearts they would not be separated, and the Maid Maline said to her father, "I can and will take none other for my husband."

Then her father flew into a rage, and had a dark tower built, into which no ray from sun nor moon could penetrate. When it was finished he said, "You shall stay here for seven years, and then I will come and see whether your stubborn spirit is broken."

Enough food and drink was carried to the tower to last the seven years, then she and her chamber-maid were led in and shut up in it and quite cut off from the sky and the earth. They sat there in the dark, not knowing when it was day and when it was night. The prince often walked round the tower calling them by name, but no sound from without pierced through the thick walls. What else could they do but wait and lament? However, the time slipped by and they discovered by the decreasing amount of food that the seven years must be approaching their end. They thought that the hour of their deliverance had come, but no stroke of a hammer could be heard, and not a stone fell out of the wall; it appeared as though her father had forgotten them. When they had only enough victuals left for a short time, and saw a lingering death awaiting them, Maid Maline then said, "We must try the last resource and see whether we can break through the wall." Taking up the bread-knife, she dug and bored away at the mortar of a stone, and when she was tired the

chamber-maid took her place. After working a long time they managed to take out a stone, then a second and a third, and at the end of three days the first ray of light fell in on their darkness, and at last the opening was large enough for them to look out. The sky was blue, and a fresh air blew in on them, but how dreary everything was looking all round; her father's castle lay in ruins, the towns and villages were burnt as far as one could see, the fields lay waste far and wide, and not a soul could be seen. When the opening in the wall was large enough for them to crawl through, the chamber-maid jumped down first, and then Maid Maline followed. But whither should they turn? The enemy had laid waste the whole kingdom, driven out the king, and killed all the inhabitants. They wandered on, seeking another country, but they found neither shelter nor a single person who could give them a bite of bread, and their want was so great that they had to allay their hunger with nettles. When they came to another land, after long wandering, they offered their services everywhere, but they were driven away from each door they knocked at, and no one would take pity on them. At last they reached a large town and walked up to the royal court. But there, too, they were told to go on, till at last the cook said they might stay in the kitchen and be employed to sweep up the ashes.

The king's son in this country to which they had come turned out to be the betrothed of the Maid Maline. His father had chosen another bride for him, who was as ugly in feature as she was evil at heart. The wedding had been fixed, and the bride had already arrived, but would not let herself be seen by any one on account of her ugliness, and shut herself up in her room, while Maid Maline had to bring her food from the kitchen. When the day came round for the bride to go to church with the bridegroom, she felt ashamed of her ugliness, and was afraid that when she showed herself in the street she would be jeered and laughed at by the people. So she said to Maid Maline, "You are in for a wonderful stroke of fortune. I have twisted my foot and cannot walk well in the street; you shall put on my bridal clothes and take my place; a greater honour cannot fall to your lot."

But Maid Maline refused, saying, "I want no honour which is not my due."

It was in vain also that she offered her gold. At last she said angrily, "If you will not obey me it shall cost you your life. I need only say a word and your head will be lying at your feet."

So she was forced to obey and put on the bride's splendid clothes, with her jewels as well. When she entered the throne room, all were amazed at her great beauty, and the king said to his son, "This is the bride I have chosen for you, and whom you must lead to church."

The bridegroom was astonished, and thought, "She is like my Maid Maline, and I would believe it were she herself had she not been imprisoned in the tower all this time or else is dead." He took her by the hand and led her to the church. On the way they passed a cluster of nettles and she said—

"Little clump of nettles,
Why hast thou grown
Here all alone?
Sore hunger did drive me,
Unwillingly to eat thee,
All uncooked just as thou standest."

"What are you saying?" asked the prince.

"Nothing," she answered, "I was only thinking of the Maid Maline."

He wondered at her knowing of Maid Maline, but kept silent. When they came to the little path in front of the church, she said—

"Church path, discover not;
The real bride betray not."

"What are you saying?" asked the prince.

"Nothing," answered she, "I was only thinking of the Maid Maline."

"Do you know Maid Maline?"

"No," she replied, "how should I know her, I have only heard of her."

When they came to the church door, she said once more—

"Church door, discover not;
The real bride betray not."

"What are you saying?" he asked.

"Oh," she replied, "I was only thinking of Maid Maline."

Then he took out a costly ornament, put it round her neck, and fastened the ends together. Then they entered the church, and the priest put their hands in each other's before the altar and married them. He led her back, but she said not a word the whole way. When they had come back to the royal castle she hurried into the bride's room, laid aside the splendid clothes and jewels, and put on her own grey smock, only keeping on the necklace she had received from the bridegroom.

When night drew on and the bride was to be conducted to the royal chamber she let her veil fall over her face so that the prince should not see her features. When all the people had gone he said to her, "What was it you said to the nettles growing by the way?"

"What nettles?" she asked, "I spoke to no nettles."

"If you did not do it you are not the real bride," said he.

So, to save herself, she said—

"I must go seek my maid,
Who is wont my memory to aid."

She went out and accosted Maid Maline with, "Wench, what did you say to the clump of nettles?"

"I only said—

Little clump of nettles,
Why hast thou grown
Here all alone?
Sore hunger did drive me,
Unwillingly to eat thee,
All uncooked just as thou art."

The bride ran back to the chamber and said, "Now I know what I said to the clump of nettles," and repeated the words she had just heard.

"But what did you say to the church path as we were going over it?" asked the prince.

"To the church path!" answered she. "I did not speak to any church path."

"Then you are not the real bride."

She said again—

"I must go seek my maid,
Who is wont my memory to aid."

She ran out and addressed Maid Maline thus, "Wench, what did you say to the church path?"

"I only said—

Church path, discover not;
The real bride betray not."

"This shall cost you your life," cried the bride, but hastened back to the chamber and repeated the words.

"But what did you say to the church door?"

"To the church door!" she replied; "I did not talk to a church door."

"Then you are not the real bride."

She went out, rushed up against Maid Maline, saying, "Wench, what did you say to the church door?"

"I merely said—

Church door, discover not;
The real bride betray not."

"Your neck shall be broken for this," cried the bride, flying into a violent temper, but she hurried back to the chamber and said, "Now I know what I said to the church door," and repeated the words.

"But where is the necklace I gave you at the door?"

"What sort of necklace," she replied. "You did not give me any jewels."

"I put it round your neck myself and fastened it myself; if you do not know that you are not the true bride."

He tore the veil from her face, and when he saw her startling hideousness he sprang back quite shocked, saying, "How did you come here? Who are you?"

"I am your affianced bride, but because I feared the people would make fun of me when they saw me out of doors, I ordered the scullery-maid to put on my clothes and go to church in my stead."

"Where is the girl?" said he. "I want to see her; go and fetch her here."

She went out and told the servants the scullery-maid was a deceiver and was to be taken out into the yard and have her head cut off. The servants seized her, and were going to lead her off, but she screamed so loud for help that her voice reached the prince, and he hurried to the place from his room and gave the order to let the girl go free immediately. Lights were brought on the scene, and he discovered on her neck the golden trinket that he had given her at the church door.

"You are the real bride," said he, "who came to church with me; come to my room with me." When they were both alone he said, "On the way to church you named Maid Maline, who was my affianced bride; if I knew it were possible I should believe she were standing before me; you are like her in every way."

She replied, "I am Maid Maline, who for your sake sat shut up in the dark seven years, and suffered hunger and thirst and lived so long in want and poverty; but to-day the sun shines on me again. I was betrothed to you in the church and am your plighted lawful wife."

Then they kissed each other and were happy for the rest of their lives. The false bride was rewarded by having her head cut off.

The tower in which Maid Maline stayed remained standing for a long time, and when the children passed it by, they sang—

"Cling, clang, clower,
Who sits in the tower?
The king's daughter sits within,
I cannot see by creeping in.
The walls will not fall down,
Nor will crack a single stone.
Little Hans with the gay-hued coat,
Come along and follow me."

THE BUFFALO BOOTS

A SOLDIER who was afraid of nothing, a devil-may-care sort of fellow, when he got his discharge knew no trade by which to earn his living, so he went from door to door asking for alms. On his shoulders hung an old rain-proof coat, and he still had a pair of top boots made of buffalo leather.

One day he went across country, not heeding ditches or hedges, and came to a large wood. He didn't know in the least where he was. A man sat on the trunk of a felled tree, in a huntsman's green coat, and the soldier offered him his hand and stretched himself on the grass beside him. "I see you have fine, well-brushed boots on your feet," he said to the huntsman, "but if you had to tramp about as I have from one place to another they wouldn't last long. Look at mine! They are made of buffalo leather and have seen good service, but will still wear for years." After a while the soldier stood up and said, "I can't linger longer; the pangs of hunger drive me on. Tell me, brother glossy boots, which is the right road to take?"

"I don't know myself," replied the huntsman. "I am lost in the wood."

"Then we are in the same box," said the soldier; "let us pal together and help each other to look for the way."

The huntsman let a slight smile play about his lips, and they journeyed on in company till night fell.

"We aren't coming to the end of this wood to-night, that's evident," said the soldier; "but over there I see a light shining, which means the possibility of a supper."

They followed the direction of the light and came to a stone house. They knocked at the door, and an old woman opened it.

"We are looking for night quarters," explained the soldier, "and some food for our empty stomachs; mine, at least, is as empty as an old tinder box."

"You can't stay here," said the old woman promptly. "This is a robbers' den, and the best thing you can do is to go away as fast as you can; if you are found here it is all up with you."

"You exaggerate," replied the soldier. "I haven't had a bite of anything for two days, and it is a matter of indifference to me whether I perish here or out in the wood from starvation. I shall come in."

The huntsman was not inclined to follow, but his companion caught him by the sleeve and said, "Come along, brother, they won't collar us at once."

The old woman felt pity for their hungry condition, and said, "Creep behind the stove, and if they leave anything I will shove it to you when they are asleep."

Scarcely were they ensconced in their hiding-place than a party of twelve robbers burst in, seated themselves at the table, which was already laid, and demanded with impatient oaths their food. The old woman carried in a gigantic roast joint, and the robbers tucked in heartily. When the smell of the meat reached the soldier's nostrils, he said to the huntsman, "I cannot endure it any longer. I must sit down with them and eat."

"You imperil our lives, if you do," responded the huntsman and held him by the arm.

But the soldier began to sneeze and cough loudly. On hearing this up the robbers jumped, throwing down their knives and forks, and discovered the two men behind the stove.

"Ho, ho, gentlemen!" they cried. "What are you doing here in the corner? Have you been sent out to inquire into our mode of life? Wait a little, and we will teach you the art of swinging on a rotten branch."

"Remember your manners," said the soldier. "Offer me something to eat first, and then afterwards you may do what you like with me."

The robbers were surprised at his coolness, and their captain said, "I see you don't know what fear is. Come and have a good dinner, but afterwards you'll have to die."

"We shall see," said the soldier. He seated himself at the table and began to eat heartily. "Brother polished boots, come and eat," he called to the huntsman. "You must be as hungry as I am, and a better joint than this you couldn't have at home;" but the huntsman declined to eat. The robbers watched the audacious soldier in amazement.

"The fellow has got enough impudence," they remarked, "for ten."

"Now then, give me drink to wash it down with," demanded the soldier.

The captain was in the humour to oblige him, and called to the old woman, "Bring a bottle of the best wine from the cellar."

The soldier drew the cork and went over to the huntsman with the bottle. "Look, brother," he said, "I am going to perform a miracle, and drink their health to some purpose. Then he flourished the bottle over the heads of the robbers, and shouted, "Long life to you all! Only mouths open, please, and the right hand in the air," and he took a draught from the bottle. Scarcely had he spoken the words than they all sat motionless as if turned to stones, with their mouths open and their arms raised.

The huntsman said to the soldier, "I dare say you can do more conjuring tricks, but let us go now and find our way home."

"Not in such a hurry, brother. Having been one too many for the enemy, let us now profit by the victory," was the soldier's answer. "Look at them staring in astonishment with their mouths open. They can't move till I give them leave, so eat and drink with me comfortably."

The old woman fetched another bottle, and the soldier did not rise from the table till he had eaten and drunk enough to last him for three days. At last when day dawned, he said, "It is time now to break up the party. Come, old woman, show us the shortest way to the town."

When they got there, he went to his old comrades and said, "Out there in the forest I have discovered a nest of gallows-birds. Let us go and destroy it." The soldier put himself at the head of the regiment and told the huntsman to come too and witness the capture. He stationed his men in a cordon round the robbers. Then he drank a draught from the bottle, flourished it over their heads, exclaiming, "Live all!" They at once regained their animation, but directly they rose to their feet were caught and bound with ropes. They were thrown like so many sacks into a waggon, and were driven to prison. The

huntsman then quietly drew aside one of the men and gave him some private instructions.

"Brother polished boots," said the soldier, "we have now happily disposed of the enemy, let us march quietly home in their rear."

As they approached the town a crowd collected at the gates, huzzahing and waving green branches. Then the whole body-guard appeared.

"What's the meaning of this?" asked the soldier of the huntsman.

"Don't you know," he answered, "that the king has been travelling abroad for a long time? To-day he is coming back and everybody is hastening to welcome him."

"But where is the king? I don't see him," said the soldier.

"Here he is," answered the huntsman. "I am the king and have announced my arrival." Then he unfastened his huntsman's jacket, and showed his royal clothes underneath.

The soldier, in fear and trembling, fell on his knees and prayed to be forgiven for treating him as an equal and addresing him in such a familiar manner.

The king raised him, gave him his hand, and said, "You are a brave fellow, and saved my life. You shall suffer no more want, for I will provide for you myself. If you fancy at any time a plate of roast meat as savoury as that you ate at the robbers' table, come to my royal kitchen and you shall have it. But before you drink people's health you must first ask my permission."

THE GOLDEN KEY

In the winter time, when the ground was covered with deep snow, a poor lad was obliged to go out on a sledge to pick up wood. When he had collected his sticks and piled them on the sledge, he was so frozen with cold he thought before starting on the journey home he would light a fire to warm himself. So he swept away the snow and came to the ground, where he found a small gold key. He then dug in the earth to find the lock to which the key

belonged, and came on an iron box. "If the key fits," he said to himself, "I shall find precious jewels in the box." He examined the box all over, and at last discovered a very tiny keyhole. He tried the key and it fitted exactly. He turned it, and we must wait till he has lifted the lid to learn what beautiful and wonderful things the box contained.

LEGENDS FOR THE LITTLE ONES

I

ST. JOSEPH IN THE FOREST

ONCE upon a time a mother lived with her three daughters. The eldest was naughty and bad-tempered; the second better, though she had her faults; but the third was a good, pious child.

Strange to say, the mother preferred the eldest daughter, and could not bear the youngest. On this account she constantly sent the poor little girl out into a big forest, hoping she would lose her way and that she would thus get rid of her for ever. But the guardian angel that takes care of every pious child always brought it back to the right path.

One day, however, the guardian angel pretended to desert it, and the child then lost herself. She walked on and on till she saw a light shining from a small cottage. She knocked at the front door, and on that opening came to a second door, where she knocked again.

An old man with a snow-white beard, who looked very venerable, opened to her. He was no less a person than the holy St. Joseph. In a friendly voice he said, "Come in, dear child; sit down on my little chair by the fire and warm yourself. I will draw some clear water to quench your thirst, but I have nothing for you to eat except a few herbs, which must first be peeled and cooked."

The old man then handed her the roots and the girl

scraped them carefully. Afterwards she took the morsel of pancake and bread her mother had given her and put all into a saucepan on the fire to make a stew.

When it was done St. Joseph said, "I am so hungry; give me something to eat out of your bundle."

The child took the stew off the fire and gave him more than she kept for herself.

When they had finished their meal and said grace, St. Joseph said, "Now let us go to bed. I have only one bed, lie down in it, and I will make up a couch of straw for myself on the floor."

"No," answered the child, "you must keep your bed; the straw is good enough for me." But St. Joseph took the child in his arms, laid her in the little bed, she said her prayers, and he left her.

The next morning when she woke up she wanted to say good morning to St. Joseph, but she could not see him. She got up and looked in every corner. At last she came across a sack full of money, so heavy that she could hardly carry it, on which was written an inscription to the effect that it was for the child who had spent the night there. She took the sack in great glee home to her mother, who was obliged to accept it and express herself pleased with the present.

The next day the second daughter took it into her head to wander out into the forest. The mother gave her a much larger slice of pancake and bread to take with her. She met with the same adventures as the other sister, and came to the cottage of St. Joseph, who gave her herbs and roots to make a stew with.

When it was ready he said as before, "I am so hungry; let me have some of your food," and the girl asked him to share it.

Afterwards when St. Joseph offered her his bed and said he would lie in the straw, she said, "Come into the bed too; there is room for both of us." But he took her by the arm, put her to bed, and lay down himself on the straw.

The next morning when the child awoke St. Joseph had vanished, but behind the door was a small sack of money addressed to the child who had slept there the night. She

took the sack home to her mother, but kept a coin or two for herself.

The eldest daughter's curiosity was excited, and the next morning she, too, started for the wood. Her mother gave her as much pancake and bread and cheese, too, as she could want, and in the evening she found St. Joseph in his cottage as the other two had done.

When she had made the stew and St. Joseph said, "I am so hungry; give me some of your food," the eldest daughter replied, "Wait till I have finished; if there is anything left then you may have it." She ate it nearly all up, and the good St. Joseph had only the scrapings of the dish, and when he offered her his bed she took it as a matter of course, and let the old man lie on the hard straw.

The next morning when she woke up St. Joseph was not to be found, but she did not concern herself much about his absence, and looked behind the door for the sack of money. She thought she saw something lying there on the ground, but as she couldn't see exactly what it was she stooped to examine it, and her nose stuck fast. On standing upright again, to her horror she found she had another nose hanging to her own. She raised a frightful howl, but it was no use, she could not help seeing the strange nose sticking out in front of her. Then she rushed out, crying piteously, and met St. Joseph. She fell at his feet and begged so hard to have the extra nose taken away that he unstuck it and gave her two half pennies.

When she got home her mother asked her how much money she had had given her. Thereupon she told a lie and said, "A huge sack of money, which I lost on the way home."

"Lost!" exclaimed her mother; "we shall soon find it again," and she held out her hand to the daughter, offering to help her look for it.

At first she began to cry and refused to go, but at last they set out together. On the way they were attacked by snakes and vipers. The bad girl was stung to death, and the mother stung in the ankle for having brought her up so badly.

II

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

THREE hundred years before the birth of Christ a mother had twelve sons, but she was so needy and poor that she didn't know how she should be able to keep them much longer. She prayed every day to God that He would grant to her sons the joy of being on earth at the same time as the Saviour. As her poverty increased she sent them one after the other into the world to earn their own bread.

The eldest was called Peter, and had been a day journeying on foot when he found himself in a great forest. He tried to get out of it, but got deeper and deeper into its heart, and became so faint from hunger he could hardly stand upright. At last he became so weak that he was obliged to lie down, and he quite thought he was going to die.

Suddenly there stood beside him a small boy, who shone and looked as friendly and beautiful as an angel. The child clapped his hands together to attract his attention. When Peter looked up at him he asked, "Why do you look so sad?"

"Alas!" replied Peter, "I am wandering about in the world begging my bread. All I long for is to live to see the blessed Saviour."

The child said, "Come, then, your wish shall be gratified." He took poor Peter by the hand and led him past rocks to a great cave. Inside the walls flashed with gold, silver, and crystal, and in the middle stood twelve cradles in a row. The little cherub said, "Lie down in the first and sleep. I will rock you."

Peter obeyed, and the angel sang to him and rocked him till he fell asleep. And as he slept the second brother came, led by his guardian angel, and, like the first, was lulled to sleep; and so they all came, the twelve brothers, one after the other, lay in the golden cradles and slept. And they slept on for three hundred years, and till the night on which the Saviour was born. Then they awoke and followed Him about the earth, and were called the twelve apostles.

III

THE ROSE

THERE was once a poor woman who had two children, and every day the youngest went out into the forest to collect wood. Once when it had wandered far away, searching for branches, a small, but healthy and sturdy child came and helped to carry the wood they collected up to the cottage, but then in an instant he disappeared. The child told his mother about the stranger, but she did not believe it. At last the child brought home a rose, and told the mother it was a gift from the beautiful child, who had promised to come back when the rose was in bloom. The mother put the rose into water. One morning the child did not rise from its bed. The mother went to look for it, and it was dead. But it seemed quite calm and happy, and the rose was in full bloom.

IV

THE POOR AND THE HUMBLE ENTER HEAVEN

THERE was once a prince who walked out in the fields and was thoughtful and melancholy. He looked up at the sky, which was so beautiful, pure, and blue, and with a deep sigh said, "How well it must be with those who are up there."

Then he saw a poor old man coming towards him. "How can I get to heaven?" he asked the old man. "Through poverty and humility," was the answer. "Put on my ragged clothes, wander seven years in the world and learn what misery is, take no money, but when you feel hungry ask kind-hearted people to give you a morsel of bread. You will in this way get nearer heaven daily."

The prince took off his costly coat and exchanged it for the beggar's rags, then went away into the world and suffered hardships and privations. He had very little to eat, never gossiped, but prayed incessantly to the Lord to take him one day to heaven.

When the seven years were up he came once more to his father's castle, but no one knew who he was. He said to the servants, "Go and tell my father and mother that I have come back."

The servants laughed and thought he was mad.

Then he said, "Go and tell my brothers to come down to me; I long to see them again."

They still laughed at him. Till at last one servant went and gave the royal family his message, but none of them took any notice of it.

He then wrote a letter to his mother, in which he described his poverty and wretchedness, without mentioning that he was her son.

Out of pity the queen allotted him a place at the foot of the staircase, and every day sent a dinner to him by two of the lackeys. But one was a bad man and said to himself, "Why should this beggar be fed so well?" and he either ate the dinners himself or gave them to the dogs, and brought the feeble beggar only a glass of water. The other servant was honest, and always gave him the food meant for him.

For a long time he managed to live on it, made no complaint, but became every day more emaciated and feeble. As his sickness became serious he longed to partake of the sacrament, especially when he heard all the bells in the town and neighbourhood ringing for mass.

One day after the mass a priest came to the poor outcast at the foot of the stairs, and found him dead, holding a rose in one hand and a lily in the other, and on a paper lying by his side he had written his history.

After he was buried roses grew on one side of his grave and lilies on the other.

V

THE HARD-HEARTED SISTER

THERE were once two sisters. One of them was rich and childless, but the other was a widow with five children, and so poor that she wanted bread for herself and her family.

Pressed by want, she went to her sister and said, "My children are starving; you are rich; give me a morsel of bread."

But the rich woman had a heart of stone. She replied, "We have nothing in the house," and harshly sent her away.

Some hours afterwards the husband of the rich sister came home. When he began to cut the bread for the dinner, he was astonished to see drops of blood fall out at the first cut with the knife. His wife, in alarm, told him all that had happened. He ran hastily to the assistance of the poor widow, and carried to her all that had been prepared for his own meal. When he left her to return home he heard a great uproar, and saw a column of flame and smoke rising towards the sky. It was his own house burning. All his wealth was lost, and his wicked wife was uttering doleful cries and saying, "We shall die of hunger."

"God provides for the unfortunate," replied her good sister, who had hastened to her.

She who had been the rich woman was obliged now to beg in her turn. But no one had compassion on her. Forgetting the unworthy treatment she had endured, her sister divided with her the alms she herself received.

VI

THE THREE GREEN TWIGS

THERE was once a hermit who lived in a wood at the foot of a mountain. He divided his time between prayer and good works, and every evening, for the love of heaven, he carried two pails of water from the foot of the mountain to the top to water the plants and refresh the animals, for at that height there prevailed a violent wind which dried up everything, and the wild birds flying to this desert from the presence of man searched in vain with their piercing eyes for water to refresh them. To reward his piety a good spirit used to appear to the hermit, and bring him food when his work was done.

Thus the hermit, occupied with good works, had attained a very old age, when one day he perceived at some distance a poor fisherman whom they were taking to the gibbet. Then he said, "There goes one who is being paid according to his merits." But in the evening, when he carried the water up the mountain, the angel did not appear as usual to bring him his supper. He was alarmed at this, and sought in his heart how he could have sinned against heaven, but could discover no reason. Then he fell on his knees on the earth, and remained in prayer day and night without taking food.

One day when he was weeping bitterly in the wood, he heard a little bird singing with such a marvellous voice that he could not refrain from saying to it, "Ah, little creature, how gaily thou singest! The Lord is not angry with thee. Alas! if thou couldst tell me wherein I have offended, I would repent of my fault, and joy would come back into my heart."

The bird replied, "Thou hast done wickedly in condemning a poor sinner whom men were dragging to the gibbet; therefore the Lord is offended with thee, for to Him alone belongs judgment. But if thou repentest of thy sin thou shalt be pardoned."

Then the hermit saw the angel standing before him with a dry stick in his hand.

The angel said to him, "Thou shalt carry this dry wood until three green twigs have sprouted from it; and at night when thou liest down to sleep thou shalt put it under thy head. Thou shalt beg thy bread at men's doors, and shall not remain longer than one night under the same roof. That is the punishment meted out to thee."

The hermit took the stick and returned into the world, which he had long forgotten. He lived entirely on the alms given him at men's doors, but often his petitions were unheeded; more than one door remained closed against him, so that he frequently passed whole days without eating a crumb of bread.

One day when he had been wandering from morning till evening from door to door, and no one would feed him or grant him a shelter for the night, he went into a wood

and found at length a dwelling cut out in the rock, and in this house sat an old woman.

"Good woman," said he, "give me shelter for to-night."

"No," she replied, "I should not dare, even if I were willing. I have three sons who are robbers; if they saw you here when they come back from their wanderings they would kill you and me also."

"Let me come in," said the hermit; "they will not hurt either me or you."

The old woman had compassion, and allowed herself to be persuaded. The man lay down on the steps with his stick under his head. The old woman asked him why he did this, and he told her he was undergoing his punishment, and that this stick must be his pillow; that he had offended the Lord by saying of a poor sinner who was being taken to the gibbet that he was paid according to his merits.

Then the old woman wept, and said, "Alas! if a mere word is thus punished, what will become of my sons when they appear at the Day of Judgment?"

At midnight the robbers came in with a great noise.

They lighted a great fire which illumined the whole place, and showed them the man sleeping under the stairs. Then they flew into a great rage and cried out to their mother, "Who is this man? Have we not forbidden thee to receive any one?"

The mother replied, "Let him alone; he is a poor sinner receiving the punishment of his sins."

"What has he done?" asked the robbers. "Come, old man, tell us your sins."

He rose up and told them how he was suffering this punishment for having spoken a word that offended God.

The robbers' hearts were so touched by the recital that they were seized with fear when they looked back on their past lives, so they thought within themselves and repented with sincere conviction.

After converting these three sinners, the hermit went back to sleep under the stairs. But the next day he was found dead, and the stick under his head had sent forth three green twigs. Thus his offence had been pardoned.

VII

MOTHER OF GOD'S GLASS

One day a carrier's van, heavily laden with wine, stuck fast in a rut, and no power on earth would move it. Now it happened the Mother of God passed that way, and when she saw the distress the poor driver was in, she said to him, "I am tired and thirsty. Give me a glass of wine, and I will get your van out of the rut."

"Willingly," answered the carrier; "but I haven't a glass to pour the wine in."

Then the Mother of God fetched a white flower with pink streaks, a wild convolvulus that resembled a glass in form. She handed it to the carrier, who filled it with wine. The Mother of God drank it up, and at that instant the wheels began to move out of the rut, and the carrier drove his van on with no difficulty. The flower has been called ever since in Germany, "Holy Mother's Glass."

VIII

THE OLD BELDAME

In a big town there once lived a very old woman. At night she sat alone by her solitary hearth, thinking how she had first lost her husband, then both her children, and gradually all relations, and now to-day her last friend, so that she was indeed absolutely alone and forsaken. Her poor old heart was very sad and heavy, and above all it was the thought of the loss of her two dear sons that pained her and made her pour out bitter lamentations to God. So she sat motionless and absorbed in meditation, but suddenly she heard it ring for early mass. She was surprised to find she had sat up all night, lit her taper, and went to church. When she reached the church she found it illuminated, not by candles, but by a soft twilight radiance. It was already full of people, and there was not a place vacant, and on the old dame hobbling to her usual

seat she found it and the whole bench occupied; and when she looked at the people more closely she saw that they were her long-lost dead relations sitting in their old-fashioned garments with very pale faces. They neither spoke nor sang, but the church was full of a subdued hum and murmur.

A ghost stood up, and coming towards the old woman said, "Look there, near the altar, and you will see your two sons."

The old dame looked and saw her two children. One hung on the gallows, and the other was on the rack.

The ghost said, "Now you see what would have happened to them if they had lived. Be thankful that God took them when they were innocent children."

The old woman went home trembling with emotion, dropped on her knees and confessed to God how wrong she had been to complain. She knew now that He had done all for the best. Three days later she lay down and died.

IX

THE HEAVENLY FEAST

A POOR little peasant boy one day heard the priest say at church that if any one wished to enter paradise he must go straight forward. He set out, always keeping straight on, over hills and through valleys, without ever turning to the right or to the left. At last his road led him into a great city, and into a beautiful church where service was being performed. On seeing all this magnificence he imagined that he must be in paradise, and, full of joy, he stopped there.

When the service was over the sacristan told him to go out. But he replied, "No, I will not go; I am at last in paradise, and I will remain there."

The sacristan went to the priest and told him that there was a child in the church who would not go out, and who imagined himself in paradise.

"If he thinks that," said the priest, "we must leave him there." Thereupon he went to the child, and asked him

if he would work. The little one answered yes, and that he was used to work, but he would not go out of paradise.

So he stayed in the church, and when he was there he seemed to hear a voice saying, "Give of thy substance to the hungry." And when he saw at the church door a poor child, or an old woman holding out her trembling hand to the passers by, he would give away half his bread, and he was very happy.

Some time afterwards he was ill, and he seemed to hear the same voice saying, "I have seen thy striving after what is good. Next Sunday thou shalt sit at my table and feast with me."

And when next Sunday came the child was dead. For he had been called to sit down at the heavenly feast.

X

THE OLD BEGGAR-WOMAN

THERE was once on a time an old woman who begged, as many other old women have done, and when any one gave her anything she would say, "God bless you." Now this old woman went to a door, and before the fire stood a good little boy warming himself; and when he saw how the old woman stood shivering outside, he said to her, "Come in and warm yourself." So she came in, but as she went too near the fire her old rags began to smoke and burn before she knew anything about it. Now, should not the boy have put out the fire?—Yes. And suppose he had no water?—Why, he should have wept with sympathy, and there would have been water, for sympathy goes a great way.

XI

THE HAZEL BUSH

ONE afternoon the Christ-child had laid himself in his cot and fallen asleep. His mother came and looked at him full of joy and pride.

"That's right, my child," she said, "sleep peacefully, and I meanwhile will go into the wood and fetch you a handful of strawberries, and I know you will enjoy them when you wake." Out in the wood she found a patch of beautiful strawberries, but as she stooped down to gather them an adder sprang hissing out of the grass. She was in a great fright, left the strawberries, and hurried away.

The adder darted after her, but the Mother of God sensibly took refuge behind a hazel bush, and stayed there till the adder had crawled back. She then picked the strawberries, and as she went home she said, "The hazel bush was my protection against harm. It shall remain so for all times."

That is why the green leaves of the hazel have for so long charmed away the bites of snakes, adders, vipers, and other poisonous creeping things.

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